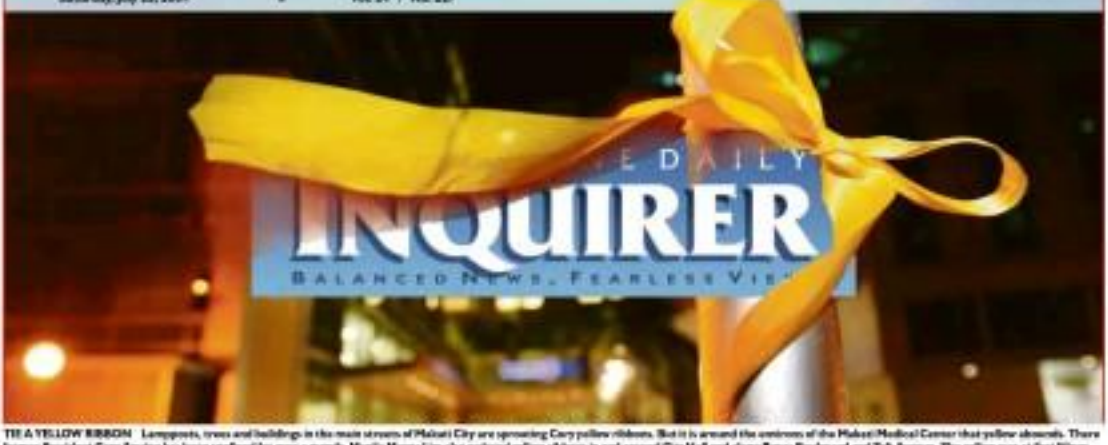
Saturday, July 25, 2009 • Vol. 24 / No. 227



TIE A YELLOW RIBBON Lampposts, trees and buildings in the main streets of Makati City are sprouting Cory yellow ribbons. But it is around the environs of the Makati Medical Center that yellow abounds. There former President Cory Aquino has been confined for over a month. Manila Mayor Lim also ordered yellow ribbons in and around City Hall and along Roxas Boulevard and Taft Avenue. The yellow was at first Ninoy Aquino's to that homecoming song. Then it became his widow's own signature color, the color of protest during the waning years of the Marcos dictatorship. The widow of the martyred Ninoy Aquino in yellow was the rallying point of the protest. The mere sight even of protesters at the Edsa I uprising more yellow to let Cory know she was not alone in the struggle for freedom. As she's not alone now. PHILIPPINE DAILY

'Tita Cory is still with us'

WHAT'S INSIDE

MILF to order ceasefire **ACROSS** / A12

Prices of 41 drugs cut in half by Aug. 15 **NEWS** / A7

New film reveals what happened during the final 192 hours of Ninoy Aquino's life **SUPER** / C1

Ex-Cabinet members demand GMA must declare she's stepping down **NEWS** / A2

FALSE ALARM The last of the five Masses for former President Cory at Manila City Hall on Friday is rudely interrupted by an announcement that she has passed. It is followed by the prayer of "The Prayer of Entrustment of the Dead to God." And the weeping commences. Later, the sorrowing crowd applauds and breathes a collective sigh of relief when told Tita Cory is alive. She lives! AP

False news of death sends people crying

By Tina G. Santos and Allison W. Lopez

YELLOW RIBBONS TO HONOR THE CANCER-stricken Corazon Aquino were seen yesterday in various parts of the country, but the public was jarred by false text messages saying she had passed on.

The healing Mass offered at noon for the former President at the Manila City Hall—the last of five organized by the city government—was interrupted by a somber announcement made by retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Adolf Azcuna.

"We just received news that Tita Cory has passed away," Azcuna, who served as Aquino's chief legal adviser during her term in 1986-92, told the crowd that packed Bulwagang Antonio Villegas shortly before the Mass ended.

His announcement, which was followed by "The Prayer of Entrustment of the Dead to God" by Fr. Mark Manalo, the Mass celebrant, caused those present to break into tears.

But another announcement was subsequently made, this time by Aquino's former appointments secretary Margie Juico.

"It's not true. Tita Cory is still very much alive, so please stop circulating rumors like that," a tearful Juico said, eliciting applause and sighs of relief from the crowd.

Juico said she had just arrived from the Makati Medical Center, where Aquino, 76, has been confined for a month now, when Azcuna made the announcement. She said she was surprised to hear the news, and that she immediately phoned

TITA CORY, A6

SC chief junks transition gov't

By Norman Bordadora and Michael Lim Ubac

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER Norberto Gonzales had met with Chief Justice Reynato Puno and discussed Gonzales' idea of a council-led transition government to oversee the drafting of a new Constitution before the 2010 national elections.

But the country's top magistrate spurned the idea, said lawyer Jose Midas Marquez, Puno's chief of staff and Supreme Court spokesperson.

"[The Chief Justice] said everything should be according to the Constitution and the rule of law," Marquez said quoting Puno's remarks to Gonzales.

Marquez said Puno and Gonzales met for about an hour in the afternoon of July 1, at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City.

Marquez and Puno had just at-

SC CHIEF, A11

Transfer to RP of 'Gitmo' prisoners a talking point in GMA-Obama meeting

By Alcuin Papa

THE POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF Guantanamo Bay prisoners to the Philippines and security in the disputed, gas-rich South China Sea region will most likely become the top talking points of the meeting between President Macapagal-Arroyo and United States President Barack Obama when Ms Arroyo visits Washington at the end of the month.

According to a highly placed source, the discussions between the two leaders will build on the points covered during the visit here two weeks ago of US Central

TRANSFER, A11

INC at 95, The musical; Lea Salonga stars

By Avlyn de la Cruz
Correspondent-at-large

STAGE AND THEATER ARTIST Lea Salonga is leading her international star power to the worldwide celebration of the 95th anniversary of the Iglesia ni Cristo on July 27.

Salonga, the award-winning star of the Miss Saigon musical, will be interpreting two songs about the story of the INC, in a 1 1/2 hour-long musical that will be telecast worldwide on the eve of the INC anniversary on Sunday.

INC AT 95, A6

Parents see lost children in Melissa

By Nikko Dizon

IN FILIPINO-AMERICAN ACtivist Melissa Roxas, they see the children they lost or are aching to find.

Parents of activists killed or missing form part of the support group of Roxas, who survived a six-day ordeal in the hands of torturers alleged to be state agents, according to Bernie Reyes, secretary general of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).

"I think there's a positive effect on [the parents]. Perhaps if Melissa gets justice, then that's a big step in trying to end [rights] abuses and in attaining justice for other victims," Reyes told the Inquirer.

The parents, mostly mothers,

PARENTS, A6

'Fishy tales' prized catch for 60 Navotas pupils

By Lawrence de Guzman
Inquirer Research

AT THE COUNTRY'S PREMIER fishing hub, tales of friendship and Earth-saving heroes were the prized catch of the day.

Around 60 schoolchildren in Navotas learned lessons on trust, teamwork and environmental awareness during a special edition of hugnayan Read-Along on July 18.

Mostly third and fourth graders from Navotas Elementary School, along with their parents and teachers, gathered for a storytelling session with Miss Earth Philippines-Air 2008 Maria Rasel Egana, select search winners Gretchen Espina and Prince Stefan, and Alitaptap storytellers Rich Rodriguez and Fa'ar Sultana.

Egana and four student-performers from the host school staged a skit titled "Eco Defenders: Mga Batang Superhero ng Kalikasan (Child Superheroes of Mother Earth)," complete with colorful costumes and props.

Playing the role of the Eco Defenders were Grade 4 pupils Joshua Cruz as Switch Mojo,

FISHY TALES!, A6

Bayani's wish: Next birthday in Malacañang

By Allison W. Lopez

BIRTHDAY WISH OR WISHFUL thinking?

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando, who turns 67 today, has made a wish: To celebrate his next birthday, not in his Edsa-Guadalupe office, but in the hallowed halls of Malacañang.

Fernando, a presidential aspirant, unabashedly told MMDA

BAYANI'S WISH, A11

9 YEARS OF GMA: A REVIEW

Palace stinks with scandals

By Eliza Victoria and Cyril L. Bonabente
Inquirer Research

SCANDALS HAVE HOUNDED virtually every Philippine president but only a few of them have had to deal with scandals of the same scale that hound President Macapagal-Arroyo to this day.

Using her awesome powers, including executive privilege that shields her Cabinet advisers and military officers from congressional investigation, Ms Arroyo has survived them all.

But the truth behind the scandals has escaped the public.

The scandals presented here are stories without endings, stories about countless hearings, witnesses who mounted, investigations that got nowhere, real issues confused and charges recommended but

PALACE, A4

At Supreme Court, she won some, lost big

By Ingrid A. Cruz

IN THE PAST EIGHT AND A half years, President Macapagal-Arroyo faced several major cases involving constitutional issues before the Supreme Court. She won some and lost others, depending on each's political orientation.

The first case summoning Ms Arroyo to the Supreme Court was Estrada vs Arroyo, in which Justice Reynato S. Puno held that the petitioner as President of the Philippines

ARROYO, A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

SUERTRES

2D	3D
3 5 4	2 4 5
4 7 1	7 1 7
4 2 3	

FOUR DIGIT

4D	3D	2D	1D
6	9	1	1
2	0	5	

MEGALOTTO 6/45

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Resist GMA extension, people told

By Editor-C. Tandoc Jr.

FEARING THAT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo would do everything to stay in power, a group of former Cabinet members, including those she had appointed, called on the public to demand that Ms Arroyo categorically declare she would step down next year and be ready to resist if she does not.

"We ask the Filipino people to be prepared to do anything and everything to thwart all plans and attempts to prolong the rule of the present administration under the leadership of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," the group Koalisyon Sosiyal Sosyedad-Civil Offender (FSGO) said in a statement.

The FSGO said the public must demand that Ms Arroyo unequivocally declare in her last State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday that she would relinquish her post and vacate house and orderly electorate for her successor next year.

Prepare to resist

If she does not, it would mean that she intends to cling to power, controlling the public must be prepared to resist, the FSGO added.

"We feel people power before. The public should be ready to do it again, if necessary," former Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Augelio Teehankee said.

Former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz had earlier warned that Ms Arroyo planned to remain in power beyond her term but Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno quickly branded the warning as mere "hallucination."

But FSGO member Karina David, whom Ms Arroyo had once appointed as chair of the Civil Service Commission, believed the threat was real.

Sona messages

However, the biggest and most immediate challenge she said was: "How do we get people to treat this threat seriously?"

In the statement, the FSGO said the public should look for the following messages in Ms Arroyo's Sona on Monday:

• That she will relinquish all power on noon on June 30, 2010, and thus allow the peaceful and orderly transfer of power to her duly-elected successor;

• That she will not allow any effort to alter, amend, or revise the Constitution before June 30, 2010, nor would she support any effort to prepare for a Constituent Assembly;

• That she will ensure that all support mechanisms will be undertaken to ensure honest, honest, free and orderly elections on May 10, 2010, and will not in any way use the powers and resources of her incumbency office to influence or alter the people's free and sovereign choice of their next leaders, nor in any way cause the ballots of said electoral exercise;

• And that she will not entertain any suggestions or attempts to impose emergency rule or martial law and would preserve all public officials who respect the same.

The statement was prepared by the following FSGO members: David, former Justice minister Hernan Vitug, former national treasurer Leonor Briones, former peace process presidential adviser Teresita Deles and former National Economic and Development Authority director general Cielito Habito.

4 options for GMA

Hussein said that if Ms Arroyo would keep quiet about these issues during her Sona, "it would be clear that she intends to remain in power."

David said the administration appeared to be considering four options to either keep Ms Arroyo in power or ensure she is safe from any action the steps down. First ensuring her successor would be an ally, to declaring emergency rule or even failure of elections next year, or pushing Charter Change either now or after next year's elections.

The FSGO expects Ms Arroyo's last Sona to be just a "mere platform to crow about her supposed achievements."

David said the Sona was meant to report on "what is the state of the nation, not about the state of what I have done."

Comelec loses commissioner

By Kristine L. Alave

FORMER COMMISSION ON Elections (Comelec) commissioner Leonardo Leonida, whose appointment to the poll body was not renewed by Malacañang, will join the board of Philex Mining Corp. while waiting for a vacancy either in the Sandiganbayan or the Court of Appeals.

Two Comelec officials, who declined to be identified as they were not authorized to speak on the President's decisions, said Leonida was appointed to the board of the mining company.

The government has a vacancy today in the publicly listed mining firm through the Social Security System and the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Nominated

One of the officials added that Malacañang told Leonida he would be reinstated to a post in the high- or court as soon as there is an opening. "It's either the Sandiganbayan or Court of Appeals. Philex would just be a halfway house," the Comelec insider said.

A Bataan-appointed trial court judge who served in Malabon City and Laguna province, Leonida was appointed by the President to the commission on July 2008.

His appointment was supposed to be confirmed last February, but the hearing was delayed since Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who wanted to question Leonida, said she could not make it because of a previous commitment.

Yesterday, Malacañang announced the reappointment of Elias Yusoph as commissioner.

GMA'S SONA

'Audio visuals, not promises'

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo will deliver her 40-minute State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday with more of her usual prop: PowerPoint presentation of her accomplishments, videos of roads and bridges, and a parade of special guests.

"We're going to have audio-visuals to accompany her speech if only to prove critics carrying that her Sona is full of empty promises," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in a briefing.

As in her previous addresses, Ms Arroyo's speech on Monday would be punctuated by video footage of the completed roads, bridges, airports and sea ports built during her eight-year presidency, he said.

And of course, she will be parading beneficiaries of the government's pro-poor programs as well as guests, computed of outstanding Filipinos, Remonde said.

"We take pains to bring [to Malaki it to show those are the programs and the beneficiaries," Turse are people in the... ion of the programs," he said.

Despite the planned huge rollers, Ms Arroyo is so excited about her last Sona that she has spent some time rehearsing her delivery, and revising the draft.

In session, the address will drive Team Unidos and the Sen. senate pilabol, and will attempt to close persistent speculations about her attempt to perpetuate herself in power through Charter change.

According to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Remonde, the has exhausted the words "Ease of doing business" before some Cabinet members, and has made revisions to number of times.

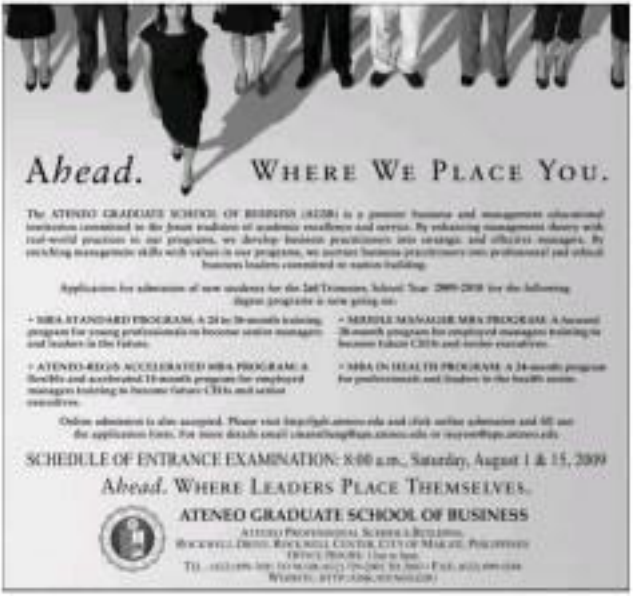
The last revisions could be done hours before delivery they said.

"She's really putting much attention to it. Every Sona has always been a magnum opus for the President. It's fair to say indeed that more efforts have been [expended on this one," Remonde said.

Gabriel Claudio, presidential political adviser, doubted Ms Arroyo would be distracted by what are being touted as huge anti-Sona rallies, saying these have become "overanticipated" for the past years.

In her Sona, Ms Arroyo will report on only her administration's accomplishments in the past eight years, but also her efforts in coping with the global economic downturn as well as her vision for the next leader, Remonde said.

Asked if if she had accomplished what she had spelled out in her 10-point agenda, he said: "Most if not all have been accomplished...It will be a mission accomplished thing."



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Cinema 999, Cinema 1000.

Parents see their missing children in Melissa

From page A1

are members of Hustisya!, a group that organizes victims of human rights abuses under the Arroyo administration and assists them in seeking justice.

In particular, Edita Burgos, mother of missing activist Jonas Burgos, has a "subpoena server" on Sunday, Rampanay secretary general Mario Estripet said.

Enriquez recalled Roan telling her that as soon as she saw Edita Burgos at the Filipina Against International Neglect activities, she knew a repeating engagement in Los Angeles, California, Enriquez said.

The 21-year-old Roan returned from the United States on July 23 to press her case against her purported torturers. She is in the protective custody of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

She testified on Thursday before the CHR and will testify at the Court of Appeals and the House of Representatives as her retrial in the hands of torturers who, she said, accused her of being a communist and threatened to kill her.

Roan, a member of Bayan Ulat and the Los Angeles-based cultural group Hale Aina, was abducted along with two companions on May 16 in La Paz, Iloilo.

They were released on May 21. The military has denied involvement in the abduction and torture.

According to CHR Chairperson Leila de Lima, Roan is staying in a safehouse provided by the agency. She has close-in security who goes with her everywhere. Various groups coordinate for her food and other expenses.

Embracing Roan

Enriquez recalled that when Roan was "surfaced" on May 25, "the mothers became very excited."

She said Roan, Linda Cadapan, Concie Empeño and Lolita Robleza rushed to the European office in Quezon City as soon as they found the news.

"They told me, 'We want to embrace her,'" Enriquez said, adding that for the mothers, embracing Roan was like embracing their own missing children.

Enriquez recounted that while inside the van with Roan from the airport on July 26, a chilling thought flashed in Burgos' mind: "What if we were ambushed? What would we do?"

"Mrs. Burgos told me, 'You know, Marie, very calmly I thought to myself that I will shield Melissa from harm and protect her at all cost,'" Enriquez said.

She said she herself got teary-eyed at the thought.

On July 28, the mothers of missing University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño and of activist Reynaldo Robleza finally got the chance to hold Roan in their arms.

Enriquez said they saw one another at the hearing conducted by the Iloilo Provincial Committee of the California-Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church, which accompanied Roan to the Philippines.

Feeling like their daughter

According to Bayan's Reyes, Hustisya! head Evita Hernandez diligently watched over Roan at the CHR public hearing on Thursday.

Hernandez, the mother of slain activist Beng Hernandez, rubbed Roan's back and gave her tender while she testified at the hearing, Reyes said.

"The mothers will really fight for Melissa," Enriquez said. "Melissa told me, 'Tita, I feel like I am their daughter; I do not regret coming back.'"

Malacañang welcomed Roan' testimony to the CHR on her purported abduction and torture.

"We are glad that she is home and we are glad that she's giving a testimony and is identifying those who allegedly tortured her," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde told reporters at a briefing.

Full cooperation

Remonde said President Benigno Aquino has instructed all government agencies, including the military, to fully cooperate with the CHR investigation.

"The President has directed all concerned government agencies to give full support and cooperation for the objective and thorough investigation of the complaint of Melissa Roan. As a matter of policy, this administration does not condone human rights violations in any form," he said. **With a report from TJ Burgonio**

Arroyo and the Supreme Court: She won and lost major cases

From page A1

had voluntarily given up his office in Malacañang and thereby allowed then Vice President Arroyo to take over as constitutional successor.

The decision, which included the consolidated case of Estrada vs Desierto for raising the same constitutional issues, was concurred in by five other justices. Two more filed separate concurring opinions, making eight of them, with five others concurring only in the result.

Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban and Justice Ricardo L. Davide Jr. did not take part in view of the active role they played in Mr Arroyo's ascension to the presidency.

After the controversial 2004 presidential election, Mr Arroyo suffered a triple whammy from the Supreme Court in 2007 with the release of its decisions in the cases of Senator vs Executive Secretary Ermita, Bayan vs Ermita, and Biraogo vs Ermita.

Chief Justice Puno was on leave when all the three cases were decided, the first two cases were resolved unanimously by the other justices, with three justices dissenting in the third case.

Executive privilege

The first case—Senate vs Ermita—involved the question of the President's executive privilege as claimed by the respondent in his capacity as executive secretary.

Senate's argument was that by virtue of Executive Order No. 464 of Mr Arroyo, no officer of the Armed Forces could appear before a congressional investigation without her consent, as two senior officers had done and were facing court-martial proceedings as a result.

Justice Conchita Carpio Morales, supported by the rest of the court, declared all her co-respondents research as follows:

"EO 464 has a direct effect on the right of the people to information on matters of public concern. It is, therefore, a matter of public interest which members of the body politic may question before this court. Due process thus requires the people should have been apprised of this measure before it was implemented.

"Congress undoubtedly has a right to information from the executive branch whenever it is sought to aid of legislation. If the executive branch withholds such information on the ground that it is privileged, it must so assert it and state the reason therefor and why it must be so special.

"The issue provisions of EO 464, however, allow the executive branch to evade congressional requests for information without need of clearly asserting the right to do so and/or professing the reasons therefor. By the mere expedient of invoking such provisions, the power of Congress to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation is frustrated."

'Instrument of tyranny'

The second case—Bayan vs Ermita—was filed by members of civil and political groups against dozens of officials of the Armed Forces in violation of the Public Assembly Act and in compliance with the calibrated preemptive response prescribed by Ermita.

After examining the arguments of the parties in light of the position of the Supreme Court in its past decisions on freedom of expression, Justice Adolfo Azcuna called for the strict enforcement of Republic Act No. 6968 and the invalidation of calibrated preemptive response as an instrument of tyranny.

The third case—Randy David et Al. vs Mr Arroyo—was 90 percent in favor of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 declaring a state of national emergency that the court said was within the military powers of the President.

It was only in the last few pages of the 96-page decision that it held that "the warrantless arrest of Randolf S. David and Ricardo Llamas, the dispersal and warrantless arrests of the KMU and NaFlu-KMU during their rallies in the absence of proof that they committed, were committing or were about to commit an overt or criminal act, including acts of lawless violence, invasion or rebellion and violating BP 880, the imposition of standards on media or any form of prior restraint to the press, as well as the warrantless search of the Tribune offices and the validated search of other articles for publication are declared unconstitutional."

That, at least, saved the decision from being another hallelujah for Mr Arroyo.

Nervous Senate

Whatever relief the first case must have given the people, its legal error has been diminished by the redefinition of executive privilege in the highly unacceptable case of Neri vs Senate.

In that case, petitioner Romulo Neri was allowed to invoke Mr Arroyo's exercise against answering certain questions put to him by the Senate in connection with its investigation of the scandalous NBN-ZTE contract.

The now-late was decided by a panel of the Supreme Court with only the reelected Chief Justice Puno and Justices Carpio, Azcuna, Tinga-Santiago, Austria-Martinez, with the series of the much-admired earlier case, Conchita Carpio Morales, dissenting.

Bangsamoro Treaty

Another interesting question reached the Supreme Court when it was asked about the First Nation under the so-called Bangsamoro Treaty.

This was an absurd attempt to create a presumptive state independent of our republic, with its own territory in Mindanao, which is one of the three areas subject to the jurisdiction of the Philippines.

The authorized representatives of Mr Arroyo, including the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, were already prepared to sign the agreement when angry protests resounded throughout the land.

The proposition was did not deserve a hearing from the Supreme Court and the unsigned Bangsamoro Treaty died a-borning.

All throughout her inglorious reign, Queen Gloria has never renounced her scheme to retain her ill-fitting crown. Last year she consigned her own Lambino to Commission on Elections to the judicial tandem of Brillantes-Commission on Elections as later dismissed by Santiago vs Commission on Elections.

Still the insistent royalty is undaunted. She is now orchestrating the non-constitutional constituent assembly (Con-ass) without the participation of the Senate, but as former President Fidel V. Ramos would counsel her, "Listen to the natural is optional, but running down is compulsory."

Editor's Note: The author was associate justice of the Supreme Court from April 16, 1986, to Oct. 11, 1999. He's now an Inquirer columnist.

Palace stinks with scandals

From page A1

nator Gloi.

● **Hello Garci (2005)**

Allegations that Mr Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano conspired during vapid conversation to rig the 2004 presidential election spurred the most dangerous political crisis to face her administration.

Mr Arroyo apologized to the nation in an "I am sorry" speech, Congress held numerous hearings, street protests erupted and senior presidential advisers resigned.

The opposition also tried to impeach her but the Mr Arroyo's loyal House allies crushed all attempts.

● **MRS-ZTE project (2007)**

Businessman Joey de Venecia said a $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) contract with China's ZTE Corp. was overpriced by $130 million in cost kickbacks.

De Venecia and former government consultant Rodolfo "Rudi" Lozada claimed the President's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, and then Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos were involved in bribery to get the project approved. Both denied any wrongdoing.

Abalos resigned from the Comelec and was later charged with graft before the Office of the Ombudsman. Malacañang scrapped the deal.

● **Jose Pidal (2008)**

Sen. Shuffle Lacson accused Mike Arroyo of amassing more than P200 million from campaign contributions and putting the money in secret bank accounts under the name of "Jose Pidal."

Mike Arroyo's brother, Ignacio, claimed he owned the Pidal accounts but invoked his right to privacy.

In 2008, Malacañang balked at the reopening of the Senate probe, saying it was a "dead issue."

● **Fertilizer fund scam (2004)**

Weeks before the presidential election, Sen. Panfilo Lacson accused Mr Arroyo of "virtual pork barrel," saying she deliberately raised the release of P728 million to favored officials to buy fertilizers and pesticides for their constituents even though it was harvest season.

The Senate committee on agriculture, together with the blue ribbon committee, conducted the probe, saying it was a "dead issue."

Lacson charged that Mr Arroyo should be "held accountable" for mismanaging the agricultural fund. The Commission on Audit said the fertilizer were overpriced by 681 percent or P126 million.

The blue ribbon committee recommended the filing of plunder and other charges against Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante and nine others, who denied the charges.

● **Jueteng (2005)**

Sen. "Jinggoy" and ex-governor of the illegal numbers game "Jueteng" told the Senate they had given protection money to Mike Arroyo and his congressman son, Juan Miguel ("Mikey").

Several witnesses—Sandra Cam, Richard Gomez and Dr. Mortheuis Abraham Rivera—told a Senate hearing that Mike Arroyo, Mikey Arroyo and Iggy Arroyo had been receiving payoffs from betting operations in Bicol. The Senate registered the accusations.

Witnesses Garcia and Rivera retracted their testimony.

● **Clark bailout (2007)**

Ms. Arroyo had breakfast at Malacañang with over 100 congressmen and around 200 local officials. They were given paper bags containing between P200,000 and P500,000.

Mr Arroyo's Kampi party and the League of Provinces of the Philippines said the money came from them to fund projects and help their members, and that Mr Arroyo knew nothing about it.

Former Speaker Jose de Venecia said the money was a bribe to quash an impeachment case against Mr Arroyo.

● **World Bank loan (2007)**

The World Bank put on hold a $232-million loan for national road improvement projects after bid rigging was uncovered, it blacklisted seven firms.

Senator Lacson said anomalies in a World Bank report implicated Mike Arroyo and others in the irregularity. The bank said the report was "strictly confidential."

● **NorthRail (2008)**

The $503-million NorthRail mass transit project calls for a 32-kilometer railway to carry passengers from Caloocan City in Malabon, or vice versa, in 30 minutes.

An expert told the Senate the proposed railway is simply an upgrading of the old Philippine National Railways (PNR) system and that its results would hardly compare with the electric-powered trains of the LRT and MRT.

Former Sen. Franklin Drilon called the project "the greatest train robbery in history." In April this year, Mr Arroyo approved a $347-million increase in the cost of the project.

● **SouthRail (2007)**

SouthRail is a $932-million project to link Laguna to Bicol provinces through a high-speed train service funded by a loan from China.

Lacson said SouthRail was overpriced by 32 percent, or about $78 million.

● **Fiatexco (2007)**

Mirror Oro Gold Resources Corp. won the right to operate the national power grid system of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

Alleging a "conflict of interest," senators and the official in charge of privatization, Jose Almeda, ran a brandstorm ally of businessman Enrique Razon Jr. of Mirror Oro. Razon, treasurer of the administration's party, Lakas-Kampi-CMD, also heads the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI), of which Razon is director.

● **Venable (2005)**

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and $6 billion fine Venable LLP signed an agreement that would help the administration seek US funding for the Philippines' shift to a parliamentary system.

Mr Arroyo scrapped the deal because it "became unnecessarily controversial."

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Port users threaten strike

By Jeannette I. Andrade

CUSTOMS BROKERS, TRUCKERS, importers and other port users in the country threatened yesterday to stage a nationwide strike next week which they warned would paralyze port services in the country.

The groups claim that only the abolition of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG), which they labeled as the "Presidential Abu Sayyaf Group," or the immediate intervention of Malacañang to their concerns over the agency would prevent the nationwide port paralysis.

The customs brokers-truckers holiday slated on Tuesday will be staged by members of the Professional Customs Brokers Association of the Philippines (PCBAP), the Confederation of Truckers Associations of the Philippines (CTAP), the Visayas-Mindanao Customs Brokers Association Incorporated (Vismincbai), and the National Confederation of Customs Brokers of the Philippines (NCCBP).

Also participating in the protest are members of the Bureau of Customs Employees Association (Bocea), Allied Concerned Truckers' Owners Organizations United, the Pinas Imports Brokers Association Incorporated (Pibai), and the Mayor Ajgal Sanatbang Pemanuel Pemanta (Map).

At a press conference yesterday at the Intramuros Golf Club, Pcbaap president Aggabo Mendez Jr. lashed out at the PASG headed by its chief subcommissioner Antonio Villar Jr. as a "nuisance" and lamented the agency's "arrogance" in dealing with port service users.

"Port services in the country are suspected to be paralyzed on Tuesday unless PASG is dismantled or abolished and Villar is put out of the picture," Mendez warned, adding that they hoped Malacañang would intervene.

"Please remove Villar, abolish PASG or replace it with a new group or a provisional customs broker," Mendez appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Mendez claimed that imports and exports were the "sole and exclusive domain" of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the bureau's authority must not be usurped by the PASG.

SC suspends lawyer for 3 years

By Norman Bordadora

THE SUPREME COURT HAS SUSPENDED lawyer Melanie Macalincag Dans-Jones for violation of the Code of Professional Responsibility that mandates lawyers to refrain from engaging in unlawful, dishonest, immoral or deceitful conduct.

Macalincag's suspension stemmed from the disbarment case filed against him by Rodolfo Ilao, manufacturer and distributor of CDO-canned goods and grocery products.

He was found to have continuously misused Rodolphino to his newspaper columns as well as radio and television programs after a consumer filed a complaint about the quality of CDO Liver Spread in 2006.

Macalincag was found to have attacked Rodolphino even after the parties have already settled their dispute.

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ERRATUM:

In the announcement of the 2009 Gawad DES finalists published in this newspaper on July 19, 2009, it was inadvertently indicated that Usec. Gumersindo D. Lasaten was from the Department of Agrarian Reform. Usec. Lasaten was from the Department of Agriculture.

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'Tita Cory still with us'; news of death exaggerated

From page A1

ries of Aquino's daughters, Pinky Abellada, who told her it was not true.

Just sleeping

Later, Arroyo told reporters: "I just came from the hospital [where] we passed the rosary. Tita Cory is still very much with us; she's just in a deep sleep.

"I hope you will stop spreading and just wait for news from the family. Nothing can be more credible than words coming from the family. Let's just respect that and continue praying for her."

Aquino's spokesperson Deedee Siytangco also said the rest managers were not true.

Siytangco said she was in constant touch with the Aquino children, and that she last spoke with Pinky Abellada at noon yesterday.

"I told her I was going out for the weekend, and Pinky said I should get a break, that there's nothing to worry about," Siytangco said.

A flurry of rumors flocked to the Makati Medical Center until the wild rumors that Aquino had died.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim was the first to arrive at 5:30 p.m. since the text messages made the rounds. Before leaving at around 2:15 p.m., he said Aquino was "alive and only sleeping."

Family statement

Tighter security was imposed and identified members of the media were barred from entering the hospital.

All throughout the afternoon, a steady stream of visitors, including Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Optical Media Board chair Edu Manzano and Bishop Deo Villegas, were seen going into the facility.

It was the first time the Aquinos entertained visitors other than family members.

At around 4 p.m., Dr. Eric Nobla, chief of the patient relations department, read a statement from the family.

"[We] appreciate expressions of support from the public, but would like to request that any announcements from the five children and the grandsons be given credence by the public and the media."

Lim asked for prayers from the public, saying there were "troubled times right now."

At around 5:30 p.m., the locations saw five uniformed policemen outside the lobby—an unusual sight because only security guards had heretofore been posted at the hospital's perimeters.

It was quiet on the ninth floor where, observing from a distance, the reporters saw Siytangco, Joaco and Aquino nephew Rafael Lopa as they came and went.

Lopa, around swamped, but a woman who hugged him looked like she had been crying.

Baby James Yap, Aquino's grandson by youngest daughter Kris, rushed to the corridor with his nanny oblivious to what was happening around him.

Hospital security guards and the family's personal bodyguards closely monitored the south floor to ensure privacy for the Aquinos.

Mayor Edjmar Binay, who was installed as Makati chief during Aquino's term, yesterday announced that nine-day healing Masses would be celebrated next week.

The noon Masses are to be held starting on Tuesday.

Apology

At the Manila City Hall, Arroyo apologized for the false alarm. He said he had been "hesitant" to make the announcement but was urged to do so by Aquino's close friends who had received "Cory is dead" text messages.

"The first news was received through text messages by almost everybody here. They just asked me to announce it because neither the family nor Mayor Lim is here," Arroyo said.

Arroyo advised reporters to Tune Station, the wife of Aquino's former Interior secretary Ernie Santos, who, he said, "let me read the last message about Tita Cory and asked me to announce it."

"But after the verification and the announcement of the Joint, we are very glad that Cory is still alive, and I call on all Filipinos to please pray for her. Maybe what had just happened could mean that she will live longer," he said, and described Aquino as "an excellent President, excellent boss, excellent person."

Tina Santos declined to be interviewed.

Before the Mass, a rosary led Mayor Lim read a prayer and urged those present to offer a minute of silent prayer every hour for Aquino.

According to a statement issued by his office, Lim left the Mass early to attend to another urgent appointment but he removed his chief of staff Ric de Guzman to thank in his behalf those who had attended the Mass.

Embassy faux pas

Even the British Embassy in Manila was fazed by the false text messages, and went so far as to issue a statement denying the "confidences" in the Aquino family.

But the embassy quickly issued an apology in an e-mail to the media: "Our deepest apologies, it appears the information are received was premature. Please disregard our statement until Presidents Aquino's passing has been confirmed."

In the statement, British government officials expressed admiration for Aquino, the heroine of the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolt that toppled Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship.

Dante Jimenez, the founder of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, called for an immediate inquiry into the British Embassy's premature

Lucena City to San Pablo City toward Calamba City; in Batangas, from Lipa City passing through the Star Toll Highway to Calamba City; from Nasugbu, San Jose and Tuy, Batangas, passing through Balibago, Sta. Rosa and Biñan to Calamba City; and in Laguna, from Pagsanjan, Los Baños and Victoria toward Calamba City.

The regional Highway Patrol Group is set to implement a contraflow scheme that will see vehicles from the Biñan region going to Metro Manila being diverted from Laureles City to Tagaytay, Quezon and toward Silang province.

It also advised that vehicles from Manila going to Laguna City might go through Calamba City to Los Baños, Calauan and San Pablo City and that vehicles from Manila going to Batangas City through the Tanauan Expressway might take the Sta. Rosa City exit and use the Tagaytay (Carlito Valbuena/Cherrylyn Cruz)

People are also advised to postpone "unimportant" travel plans in the area on that day to avoid contributing to the traffic snarl.

Heavy traffic expected on Monday in Calabarzon; motorists advised to detour

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Drivers are implementing a contraflow scheme in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) on Monday in anticipation of heavy vehicle traffic due to two big events scheduled on the day.

The major occasions are the celebration by the Iglesia ni Cristo of its 95th grand anniversary at Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Barangay Malate, Calamba City, from 6 p.m. to 12 midnight, and Feast Day Sale, Calamba City, from 6 a.m. to 12 midnight.

An advisory from the office of Senior Supt. Abner Mendoza of the Calabarzon regional police directorial staff, said about 300,000 people from the provinces of Quezon, Batangas, Cavite and Laguna are expected to join the Iglesia's celebration.

Also on Monday, police are supposing several military organizations to contribute to the security of the event, as they feared from Calabarzon to Mindanao to hold protest rallies during the Sona.

Police have tagged the following as critical areas: from Lucena City to San Pablo City toward Calamba City; in Batangas, from Lipa City passing through the Star Toll Highway to Calamba City; from Nasugbu, San Jose and Tuy, Batangas, passing through Balibago, Sta. Rosa and Biñan to Calamba City; and in Laguna, from Pagsanjan, Los Baños and Victoria toward Calamba City.

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INC at 95, The musical; Lea Salonga stars

From page A1

The songs, "Sumilong sa ang Kanyang Liwanag" and "Mapia sa Matuyong Silangan," may have the millions of INC brethren worldwide bid as they look back on 95 years of their church which "resurfaced" on July 27, 1914 from its humble beginnings in Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila.

During the taping of the musical last Wednesday in a live audience of 2,000 INC members, Salonga's eloquence and sincerity almost reduced her listeners to tears.

"Sumilong" is a composition of Ryan Cayabyab with lyrics by INC spokesperson Bienvenido C. Santiago while "Mapia" is an original composition of the late National Artist for Music Lucio San Pedro.

She was accompanied by the Philharmonika Orchestra conducted by her brother, Gerard.

Actress and television host Gladys Reyes, who was among the presenters that evening and is also a church member, could not contain her delight as she thanked Salonga for her wonderful rendition of the two songs about the INC.

In part, Salonga remarked that she can now boast that she made a known across "kanta-buhla" cry.

The INC 95th Anniversary Special features Salonga and other singers and performers from different parts of the world who are also members of the INC. It will be aired on the eve of Monday's grand celebration worldwide from 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. over GMA TV-48 and Net 25.

The musical debut for the first time in the Philippines as all-HD production shot with a 30-camera setup using the latest high definition technology. It has set for background a customized satellite system 160 E x 38 El using 3 digital HD projectors.

The INC last held a grand celebration 20 years ago during the church's 75th Anniversary in 1989. Tens of thousands of INC members attended it at the Central Temple, with delegates occupying almost the entire stretch of Commonwealth Avenue and major streets in Quezon City.

Salonga expressed her admiration for the tremendous growth of the INC. It was not the first time for her to sing in an INC occasion.

Song from the heart

"Being here today brings back memories of when I was young and I performed right here in Central ... I think I was about 10 years old, not exactly here at the studio, but right here in Central. I can't believe how much the church has progressed and grown since the last time I was here. From a small country like the Philippines, it is now virtually in every corner of the globe. It's astonishing that this Church has truly been guided by a higher power," she said.

She offered her song "Journey" to every brethren of the INC worldwide saying it's a song "from my heart to yours" and wished that the Church "be filled with God's blessings and love" as the INC looks forward to more anniversaries.

5,480 congregations

At 95, the INC has over 5,400 congregations in 91 countries and territories and a member-ship composed of 3.02 nationalities.

On the actual day of the celebration on Monday, dubbed Iglesia ni Cristo Day, simultaneous worship services will be conducted in making reading increasing for the children."

Held in partnership with Newsstar Vice Mayor JV Javier, the July 18 session was in line with the municipal government's Early Literacy Program for public schools.

"We want to expose our kids to the habit of reading," said Javier. "We know that this advocacy may not show quick results, but the important thing is that we are building a good foundation in the education of our children."

"We learned Read-Along in class we have been inspired by your program," the vice mayor told the bayanes.

Start at home

Javier encouraged the parents to promote an atmosphere of reading at home.

"Parents are the greatest role models of kids. If you promote reading right at your home, we can ensure the continuity of the program, and the kids will get into the habit of reading more," he said.

The program, hosted by Asian Inquirer reporter Ruth Navarro, was in cooperation with the Office of the Vice Mayor of Tanauan, CHAT-Ayala Center and STAGE-SEED.

Books from Visol Publishing were also given away during the program.

The Tanauan Read-Along, launched in May 2007 by Inquirer Research, Library and Information Services, aims to promote the love of reading among children through storytelling sessions with celebrities and volunteer readers.

Read-Along today

The next session, which will be in celebration of the National Children's Book Day, will be held today at 10 a.m. in the Inquirer main office in Makati.

The session will feature readers Ana and Rafili Alonzo, and Ateneo High School debaters, and will also launch the Inquirer Read-Along outreach program, Roll. With a report from Ilan Pedrano, Inquirer Research

'Fishy tales' prized catch for 60 Navotas pupils

From page A1

Naomi Gayle dela Cruz as Whale Hunter, Alaiza Gayle Castillo as Water Sprayer and Theresa Marie Taddeo as Marine Crusader.

The skit told the story of Switch Ninja, Water Saver and Water Warrior who accompany Mother Earth on a tour of renewable energy sites.

They met Secretary Lilly Marine Crusader, whose mission is to protect the sea from pollution. The superheroes ultimately remind children that they can help save the planet even in their own little ways.

"Defenders" is an advocacy material developed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Department of Energy's Sustainable Energy Development Program (SEDP).

"I have always been comfortable presenting to kids," Ejipala said. "I enjoy reading to them and having them as audience because I was part of similar activities even when I was in high school."

Purpose-driven reader

Currently preparing for the Miss Tourism Queen International pageant in August, Ejipala counts among her sources of inspiration Rick Warren's bestseller "The Purpose Driven Life."

Fajutao and Bolos read "Mapia si Rita," a fable—starring a shrimp and fish—about friendship and teamwork. The story was written by Carlo Pacio and published by Adarna House.

The student occasionally took a pause in the reading to ask the children questions and make sure they followed the story. They also rendered jokes and encouraged the kids to imagine being in the characters' situations.

"I was nervous at first," Bolos said. "I was really worried they'd fall asleep in the middle of our story but thankfully, they didn't."

"We had to make it really interactive since we know children tend to have a short attention span," Ejipala added.

Last year, Ejipala also read children's stories to a group of young cancer patients.

How to live life to fullest

"It was a great experience being able to do them a favor," said Fajutao, the 2006 winner of the GMA network singing contest Pinoy Idol.

Ejipala scanned Paolo Coelho and Mitch Albom books among Fajutao's favorites, praising Lady Alluosh's "The Five People You Meet in Heaven."

"It tells you how to live life to the fullest, and just how one should appreciate everything that comes your way" she said.

Her Stubby, a 300" runner-up in the GMA campus talent search "Starstruck," standing to kids was an entirely new experience.

"It's not so much about entertaining (people) really," said Stubby, who had appeared on various GMA soaps. "I just made sure I understood the story by heart so I could relate it well to the kids."

Good foundation

Bolos considers himself a fan of teen novels, though admitting he tends to be the type who would "change books often" without finishing what he had started.

Capturing the readers were 41 singing president Rich Rodriguez and member Ria Nobleza, who read "Fish for Tino" by Becky Bravo, published by Lampara Books.

First-time reader Nobleza, a Grade 5 teacher at Calumpang, Laguna, came to the session with her sons Cheryl, 8, and Chino, 9.

School principal Florlena Mendoza commended the readers, noting how they were "able to capture the interest of the kids" as shown by the way the pupils answered the questions after the storytelling.

Mendoza said she hoped that the Read-Along visit would spur more reading activities in the school.

Early Literacy Program

Ria Salonga teacher Sheryl Hinampas, the session "successful in making reading interesting for the children."

Held in partnership with Newsstar Vice Mayor JV Javier, the July 18 session was in line with the municipal government's Early Literacy Program for public schools.

"We want to expose our kids to the habit of reading," said Javier. "We know that this advocacy may not show quick results, but the important thing is that we are building a good foundation in the education of our children."

"We learned Read-Along in class we have been inspired by your program," the vice mayor told the bayanes.

Start at home

Javier encouraged the parents to promote an atmosphere of reading at home.

"Parents are the greatest role models of kids. If you promote reading right at your home, we can ensure the continuity of the program, and the kids will get into the habit of reading more," he said.

The program, hosted by Asian Inquirer reporter Ruth Navarro, was in cooperation with the Office of the Vice Mayor of Tanauan, CHAT-Ayala Center and STAGE-SEED.

Books from Visol Publishing were also given away during the program.

The Tanauan Read-Along, launched in May 2007 by Inquirer Research, Library and Information Services, aims to promote the love of reading among children through storytelling sessions with celebrities and volunteer readers.

Read-Along today

The next session, which will be in celebration of the National Children's Book Day, will be held today at 10 a.m. in the Inquirer main office in Makati.

The session will feature readers Ana and Rafili Alonzo, and Ateneo High School debaters, and will also launch the Inquirer Read-Along outreach program, Roll. With a report from Ilan Pedrano, Inquirer Research

Prices of 41 medicines cut in half by Aug. 15

By Norman Bordadora

BOWING TO APPEALS FROM THE GOVernment, representatives from pharmaceutical firms yesterday announced that they were voluntarily giving a 50-percent reduction in the prices of 41 drugs, including those used for the treatment of hypertension, cancer, diabetes and infections.

Members of the Advisory Council for Medicine Price Regulation, including pharmaceutical industry representatives, said the reduced prices would be implemented starting Aug. 15.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque said the drug companies also agreed to voluntarily trade the prices of 32 other medicines, included those for the Maximum Drug Price Regulation for but used to treat hypertension, diabetes, influenza, hypercholesterolemia, cancer, arthritis, goiter, allergies and infections.

The cuts in the prices of the 31 medicines range from 10 to 50 percent, he added.

"We are very pleased with the fast and encouraging response of the industry to the appeal of the government to voluntarily reduce their drug prices by 50 percent," Duque said in a news conference. "In fact, we got more than what we bargained for because apart from the original list we proposed, other drug companies office offered voluntary price cuts in some of their leading products."

Among the industry representatives present during the news conference were Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines executive director Nelson Goco and Philippine Chamber of the Pharmaceutical Industry executive Ildefonso Lasam.

"Today's show of support and cooperation by a variety of stakeholders from different sectors exemplifies how public-private partnerships can be utilized to broaden access to essential medicines effectively in line with our international commitment to the Eighth Millennium Development Goal for Global Partnerships," Duque added.

Manufacturers, distributors, traders and retail outlets are expected to comply with the Aug. 15 deadline for the implementation of the price cuts, "especially those with uncontrolled systems." Those using the manual system have until Sept. 15 to do so, in order to reconcile and validate their inventories and adjust to the changes in drug prices, he added.

Sanctions, including the revocation of licenses to operate and the cancellation of marketing permits, will be imposed on those who fail to comply after the Sept. 15 deadline.

Included in the list of medicines with price reductions are those derived from antihypertensives Telmisartan and Olmesartan; antihistaminic Clophiramid; antidiabetics Glidazide; antibiotics Piperacillin, Ciprofloxacin, Metronidazole and Co-Amoxiclav; anticancer Rituximab, Carboplatin, Cisplatin, Cyclophosphamide, Mercaptopurine and Mitoxa.

Foreigners in rallies face deportation

FOREIGNERS FACE DEPORTAtion if they participate in any mass action in connection with President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address on Monday.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said that warning yesterday as he ordered Bureau of Immigration intelligence agents to monitor foreigners joining the protest actions.

In a memorandum, Libanan ordered immigration intelligence chief Fidel Flando to investigate foreign activists who will be spotted among the ranks of the protesters so they could be subjected to deportation proceedings.

Flando was also directed to "gather information for purposes of identification through photographs, passports, residence addresses, and immigration status" of those foreigners found taking part in mass actions.

Libanan reiterated his warning that foreigners should desist from taking part in such mass actions as it constitutes interfering in the country's internal affairs and violates the conditions of the foreigner's stay in the country.

"We will also base them from remaining the Philippines by putting them in our blacklist of undesirable aliens," Libanan said.

At the same time, Libanan ordered the bureau's law enforcement division (LEO) to investigate a group of nine young Belgian activists who allegedly took part in a protest march in Quezon City on Wednesday night.

COA, Customs, BIR facing contempt

By Tina G. Santos

A MANILA JUDGE YESTERDAY DIRECTED THE heads of the Commission on Audit and the Bureaus of Customs and Internal Revenue to explain within 72 hours why they should not be cited for contempt for failure to comply with his order to conduct examination of the Big 5 oil companies' books of accounts.

Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 35 issued the order following the manifestation filed by the Social Justice Society, a lawyers' group, asking the court "to impose indirect contempt motu propio against the heads of the three government agencies by committing disobedience of or resistance to the order of this Honorable Court."

In his July 7 order, Pampilo denied for lack of merit the motions for reconsideration seeking to stop his order, which were separately filed by the Office of the Solicitor General and oil firms Chevron, Petron and Pilipinas Shell.

The judge ruled that there is no law or jurisprudence that prohibits government entities to perform acts which will best serve the public.

Asean body toothless, says UN rights chief

GENEVA—UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR Human Rights Navi Pillay voiced regret on Wednesday that a new Southeast Asian rights commission had no clear mandate to protect victims of abuses in the region.

While welcoming the creation of the body by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), she said its members should be "independent and impartial" and be drawn from among real rights experts to run effectively with all sections of society.

A statement from Pillay's Geneva office said she "expressed her disappointment at the Commission's lack of a clear protection mandate," adding that she hoped its role would expand once it was formally launched in October.

Her remarks echoed concerns expressed by nongovernmental regional rights bodies and by London-based Amnesty International, over the body, whose creation was agreed at a meeting of Asean Foreign ministers in Phuket, Thailand, on July 20. Reuters

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OPINION

Forced to volunteer

THE LATEST WORD OUT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF Health is that the pharmaceutical industry in the Philippines has offered to voluntarily lower the prices of 42 branded medicines. The medicines fall under 16 of the 21 "essential drugs" categories that the DOH had recommended to President Macapagal-Arroyo for mandatory price capping under Republic Act 9502, also known as the Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act.

EDITORIAL

It should be noted that the industry left out five essentials drugs (covering 26 branded medicines), but then, it is also voluntarily cutting the prices of 31 other medicines in 22 "add-one" (outside the list of the 21 DOH-recommended drugs). Besides, according to Robert Louis Sy, program manager of the health department's National Drug Policy Unit, the remaining five will be placed under the maximum drug retail price (MDRP). In other words, we can expect cuts in the prices of a total of 99 branded medicines and not just in 21 but 53 drug categories. And the price cuts will be fully in effect by Aug. 15.

So, it may be asked, why all the fuss about an executive order imposing mandatory price caps on drugs?

The pharmaceutical industry opposes mandatory price capping. In a letter to the editor, former Ambassador Roberto Romulo, now presidential adviser on international competitiveness and chair of Tariff Commission functionaries, cautioned that imposing price controls on a limited number of medicines "sends the wrong message to the international business community regarding the commitment of our nation to a free market economy and intellectual property rights (IPR), and it will discourage job-producing foreign direct investments in all business sectors."

The warning seems to have preserved Malacañang. After announcing last July 14 that the President was set to sign the Cheaper Medicines Act, Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Gary Olivar told reporters the following day that the implementation of the MDRP on "inventors' sentiments abroad regarding the Philippines as an investment destination" would also be considered. But if the members of the World Trade Organization were sincere in adopting the "Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health," such fears may be unfounded. The Doha Declaration affirms that "the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health."

What is not being disputed is that access to affordable quality medicines is a universal humanitarian concern—even a basic human right; that the cost of medicines in the Philippines is the second highest in Asia, and that pharmaceutical companies have been selling "essential drugs"—for hypertension, diabetes, cancer, stroke, asthma and infection, 6 of the 10 leading causes of death in the country—at prices at least 70 percent higher than in other Asian countries.

If drug companies can afford to sell their medicines at cheaper prices in other countries, why not in the Philippines? Medicines are not luxury items. Every year, millions of people die from ravaging infectious diseases for lack of access to affordable life-saving drugs. As the United Kingdom's trade secretary noted in a World Trade Organization gathering in December 2005, "The lack of access to essential medicines in developing countries is one of the biggest health issues—and one of the greatest injustices—in the world." And our enemies pose partners don't have access to quality medicines is their prohibitive prices.

In other words, the moral imperative for the Philippine pharmaceutical firms to lower the prices of essential drugs has been staring them in the face all along. Oliver Streeter, who seems to share the free market and IPR concerns of the pharmaceutical industry noted that drug companies could easily lower the prices of their products because of the industry's low cost operating expenses. But the fact is, they didn't. Until Health Secretary Francisco Duque involved mandatory price capping because he felt that seven months after the passage of RA 9502, competition was not working and the prices of expensive branded medicines had not gone down. It was only after the legal sword was raised that the industry offered to bring down the prices of essential medicines. In other words, it volunteered when it saw the MDRP order coming.

The President should proceed to sign the MDRP order, as a matter of policy, to include the "volunteered" 16. This won't be to the liking of the industry, but for this, it has only itself to blame.

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State of the nation

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

IF THE NATION WERE A FAMILY, IT WOULD clearly be wrong to describe its state solely in terms of how well/ill-off its earnings are relative to its needs, or how strong the house is in which it dwells. To properly assess the state of a family, it would be necessary to inquire into the authority that family decisions carry to the life of its members, and the degree to which shared values and rules of behavior shape the family's everyday actions. Where the members cannot agree on anything, where bickering rules than mutual support to the norm, where alienation rather than intimacy reigns, such a family is in all likelihood a broken one.

We, in discussing the state of the nation, there is a tendency to equate it almost entirely with its economic situation. And even here the focus is on the sheer growth of the gross domestic product, rather than on the jobs and livelihood opportunities that are created in the process. Until recently, if any is given to the sources of this growth, or to the various costs entailed in production.

In the past few days, the Inquirer has offered its readers different accounts of the state of the economy under the arroyo government, showing the larger context in which recent economic data must be viewed. They portray an economy almost exclusively sustained by remittances from overseas Filipino workers, and driven mostly by a corresponding expansion in consumer spending and services. They depict a pattern of declining tax effort, lower capacity for the market and fiscal wage earners, and yearly economic growth rates accompanied by worsening human development indicators. They show an economy that, for all its achievements, is unable to free one-third of its population from the poverty trap.

In light of these disturbing realities and trends, it seems unnecessary to even begin considering the other dimensions of the nation's current state. But it is important to complete the picture, if only to demonstrate the enormity of the challenges we face.

Instead of being contained and rendered within the bounded spheres of the law and politics, our economic inclined crises have tended to spill over to the other subsystems of society. This religious and business leaders are routinely recruited as partisans in ongoing conflicts. The personal loyalty of soldiers and policemen is unfortunately courted by politicians to the detriment of their professional commands. And the mass media are prompted to weigh in with their own political agendas, thus blurring the line between information and propaganda. Through all these, a young generation of Filipinos grows up internalizing a predisposition to resentfulness and distrust for the nation and its leaders.

The last eight years under Ms Arroyo's presidency have only reinforced these tendencies. Her legitimacy as the nation's highest official has been suspect since day one of her assumption of the presidency. And she kept her promise not to seek another term, and had she bothered to change the electoral system in time for the 2004 election, she would have had many of the nation's crises to rest. Instead, she chose to keep them alive by keeping in 2004, and worse, she compounded them by using people in the military and the Commission on Elections itself to cheat for her.

There is no simple one-shot formula to reverse the current state of our nation. The election of a new president will not revitalize our institutions overnight. He deserves long-awaited reforms in the presidency by noon of June 30, 2010 may, however, jumpstart the process of renewal. But many things can still happen between now and 2016. One sudden change such as simple as Cromwell telling the English Rump Parliament at his time, "It is not in that you should sit here any longer! You have been at too long for any good you have been doing lately... Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!"

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Weighing GMA and her administration

(Last of three parts)

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

HAVE THE ODDS IS THE ALBOSTIM FOR THE 10-point "legacy" the Arroyo administration pledged to leave the Filipino people. In succeeding columns, this column has tried to evaluate her performance from a non-partisan perspective, with utmost transparency. So far, the administration's score for the first five "legacies," assuming they are of equal importance, is 58.7 percent, which means it has delivered, on the average, almost three fifths of what it pledged. This column evaluates the last five "legacies."

6—Healing the wounds of the Edsas 1, 2 and 3(2). Ms Arroyo set out a six-point action plan to achieve this goal: (1) accelerate compensation to victims of human rights violations; (2) nationwide consultations on how to pursue reconciliation and unity; (3) providing safe venues, accessible to victims and perpetrators of oppression, for the sharing of experiences, and the possibility of obtaining reparations and for granting of forgiveness; (4) joint military reform and implementation of the findings of the Davide and Feliciano commissions; (5) design and implement creative approaches to handling conflicts involving leading figures of the administrations deposed in 1986 and 2001, and (6) addressing internal threats, emphasizing threat prevention and early warning.

There is no doubt that the resolution, as it has nothing to do with the Edsas. Of the remaining five, neither 1, 2, 3 nor 5 (unless a pardon is considered creative) have been accomplished, by her military reforms and the recommendations of the commissions, an expert's (not mine) opinion endangers accomplishment at 30 percent, lowering the five points have equal weights, the average for this legacy would be 6 percent.

7—Electricity and Water for All. Achieving the consumer objective in electricity sector reforms progress. The percentage of households with access to safe water increased from 79.1 percent in 2001 to only 80.2 percent in 2004, the last year for which data is available. If we assume the same rate of progress up to 2010, the accomplishment rate will be 42 percent.

For electricity, if the same 5 percent average of households energized, the administration gets a grade of 100 percent (100 percent of those had been energized as of 2008). But as far as households are concerned, which is the intervened metric, the percentage of households with access to electricity has risen as created over the last five years, which means an accomplishment rate of 0. The average from the two metrics is 50 percent.

Thus, the average accomplishment rate for electricity and water combined is 46 percent.

8—Opportunity to create 10 million jobs by 2010: for 2004-2008, 2.8 million new jobs were created, compared to the target for the period of 6.1 to 6.9 million jobs. This is an accomplishment rate in the of 46 percent.

9—Devolve more Manila for the 2004-2010 timeframe. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP)(P) that will be accomplished among others by: (1) establishing new centers for government, i.e. Department of Agriculture in Midsaisa, Department of Tourism in Cebu, etc.; (2) the Northrail project, to provide efficient transport services between NCR and Central Luzon, thereby promoting this area for residence, business, etc., and the Southrail project to develop the Southern Luzon corridor, connecting the NCR to Bicol; (3) improving transport within NCR by final linkage of the EDSA LRT commuter loop and other traffic management schemes involving C-5, Edsa, Commonwealth Avenue, etc.

The new centers for government were materialized; reports estimate that the Northrail and Southrail projects are about 10 percent complete; while improvement of transport within Metro Manila gets a 99 percent accomplishment rate. The average for the three subtargets is therefore 53.3 percent.

The Clockwise Link Subway-Clark corridor is the most important international center and logistics center in the Southeast Asia. The Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) is 100 percents complete, but counting the most expensive thing being or Singapore-type of corridor is another matter altogether, and at most 50 percent of that has been achieved. This average for the two is therefore 65 percent.

Summing up, the Arroyo administration's score (accomplishment rate in percent) are as follows: For Budget, 100; Education, 41; Agriculture, 50; Transport and Digital, 97.5; Revitalizing Institutions, 50; Healthcare (two events), 6; Electricity and Water for all, 46; Opportunity for employment, 44; Decongesting Metro Manila, 33.3; Developing Subic-Clark, 65. The total accomplishment for the 10 "legacies" is 492.8, and the simple average accomplishment rate is 49.28.

Which can be interpreted to mean that the Arroyo administration failed to accomplish even one-half of what it set out to do as far as its nine (no 6) legacies were concerned.

The reader is reminded that this method of evaluation of the Arroyo administration's performance has at least the following flaws: first, the quality of the achievements are for the most part disregarded (e.g., the quality of employment, of government expenditures); second, I assumed that each of the 10 points has the same weight; third, BEAT THE ODDS is only a part of the 2004-2010 Medium Term Philippine Development Plan—the government's performance on the other parts, such as the reduction of corruption and poverty, are not included. It is reader's responsibility to do such an evaluation.

The final assessment of the latter method were applied to judging the preceding administrations, one wonders whether they would fare better or worse.

A quality-of-life studies conference

FLORENCE—THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE International Society of Quality-of-Life Studies, on the theme "Elements and Goals of the Progress of Societies," was held here this week at 200-year-old Innocenti Institute of the Innocenti, founded here 600 years ago to care for homeless children, and which now also does research on children's issues and welfare. Its attendees included many government, civil society and international bodies.

A record number of 377 participants, from 44 countries, are here for the 60 sessions of this conference, and surely also for the opportunity to see Michelangelo's "David," Botticelli's "Birth of Venus," and many other magnificent works of art.

This is my seventh INQOL (pronounced "ahnock") conference. I joined in 1997, and have been a board member since 2001. It is a pleasure to again be among people who never refer to subjective indicators as "mere perceptions" but regard them equally as valid as objective indicators for measuring the overall quality of our lives.

The Social Weather Reporting system, which happens to be Mahar's oldest bureaucrat, has been presented at plenary sessions of past conferences; it is published in INQOL's books. That year, the 1995 census at EDSA1 was an actual survey of quality-of-life indicators and the relation of religiosity to quality of life (by Linda Guerrero and Mike Lubrica). There are no other Filipinos in this conference.

In the keynote lecture, OECD chief statistician Enrico Giovannini announced that the next World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, to be held in Istanbul in June 2007, is in agreement of the European Commission, OECD, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the United Nations, the UNDP and the World Bank to work towards a new paradigm for statistics and policy making, to change the economic Pendulum, but to bring also to subjective indicators of well-being.

(Actually, from National Product to GNP which sends value-added by Filipinos, wherever in the world they may be, is the more relevant concept. GDP, on the other hand, refers to value added inside

Social Climate

Mahar Mangahas

Philippine geographical territory, regardless of the nationalities of those who derive income from it.)

The heartfelt Declaration, as my mind, is a noble covers of long-known truths: that GNP is not a reliable indicator of true progress; that the measure or content of true progress should be what the citizens, rather than the government, say it is; that best practices of measurement should be shared; that statistical findings regarding progress should be communicated to the general public in ways easily understood by invitees. INQOL has learned and has been applying these principles for over two decades already. It willingly shares its knowledge and experience with those who are interested.

It seems to be that there is often too much concern for international comparability of statistics, for standardization, and too little concern for the individuality of each country. For example, the 1991 quality-of-life indicators are valid for the Philippines, regardless of whether statistical instruments in any other country are willing to adopt them.

INQOL is a fascinating group. It has the world's most distinguished researchers on happiness and satisfaction in life. The Florence conference has papers on conditions among children and women, the elderly, families in general, workers, and migrants. There are discussions of health, physical security, spiritual well-being, and the environment. And, remember, there is no interest in the Manyine of the rich and famous.

There are papers on the Lauzelin paradox...the finding that economic growth hasn't made people in the First World happier over time. If life were really better "in the good old days," then what was the use of economic growth? Well, what this data shows is that economic growth can improve happiness substantially in the poorest societies, might improve it a bit in middle-income societies, but probably can't raise happiness in the rich countries any more.

Within a given country...including the Philippines—those with higher income or economic growth tend to be a bit happier than those with lower income/status; there is usually no correlation between "happy rich" and "unhappy poor." The majority of poor people tell surveyors they are "happy," no doubt because they find happiness in non-material aspects of their lives.

Canada is quite well regarded for economic growth, it is the leader in Index of Well-being (CIW) has been put together by a consortium of public and private institutions. The National Statistics Office of Italy also seems quite progressive; it pledges to provide answers about people as subjects rather than as instruments—as the youth rather than on environment, on the elderly rather than on pensioners, about victims rather than about crimes.

Mexico is the one country in the world that has adopted maximization of Gross National Happiness (GNH), and not GNP, as an official objective. The conference session that I organized included Mexico's researcher's presentation of the Mexicanese concept of (GNH), and its efforts to measure it. The Mexicanese concept has the same definition of happiness as those in the OECD, and it also includes spiritual well-being. The Mexicanese data gathering includes a national survey of over 1,000 respondents from the 31 provinces of Mexico is only 700,000), requiring an interview hour basis (esp. Respondents are ensemble between of total attendance to the thing.

The venue of the next INQOLS conference, 18 to 24 months hence, is not yet set, but perhaps it will be in Asia. Surely the agenda will include discussion of the progress of the Istanbul Declaration by then.

* * *

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Challenges for private education, challenges for us all

(Concluded)

I COULD GO ON FOREVER WITH THIS THEY get away with it list. But we must now turn our attention to this administration, which I believe plans to hold on to power beyond 2010 through an evil means to which I have referred above, and I appeal not for a congressional seat. Whether it's because they are worried about being prosecuted for all the corruption we now experience, or because they are simply enjoying their powers and wealth, officials of this administration intend to hold on to power by hook or by crook. Their hunger is enough to compel and do something about it.

But what can we do? What must we do?

First, we must make sure that our youth registry so they can vote in 2010, apathy is our enemy. Marketing studies have shown that majority of those who do not vote are those who can't make up their minds about its part by the failure of our institutions and leaders. Our youth must realize their collective power to change things rather than run away from them.

Second, we must organize an army of volunteers from our school communities to help counter that there will be honest and fair elections in 2010. If a failure of elections occurs due to a botched election computerization effort, let's make sure a manually counted election takes place 30-days after the failed one, as provided for by law.

Third, we must ensure that a broad consensus is for sustained and massive education efforts is built. In time to positively influence election debates and candidates' choices. We must agree on a realistic reform agenda that will finally move our country's education from the bottom of the highest levels down to every school community in public or private. We must strengthen that consistency so that it is able to hold accountable

Commentary

Ramon R. del Rosario Jr.

winning candidates who committed themselves to the reform agenda.

Finally, we must commit our schools, colleges and universities to count more effort towards creating the quality of our elections by sharpening their focus on issues and not just personalities. SHC has offered as being their "Leadership Institute" to different campuses around the country to introduce the candidates and their platforms to students and communities. I encourage you to volunteer your schools to host these events, or you could organize nonpartisan debates for your own communities. Bring your congressional, gubernatorial, and mayoral candidates to your schools for debates and discussion. Create occasions for the electorate to hear and challenge their ideas and plans and not just watch them on television. Let us not allow elections to be a popularity contest because the most honest leaders in any election, are the best bets for such lists. Furthermore, your students, being our country's future, have the greatest stake in a successful, clean and honest elections.

Personally, I really want to improve our public schools. I want to give every child in this country a real opportunity to make his or her life better through a high quality education system. But I can't—we can't—not while we are led by a government where self aggrandizement, political irresponsibility and greed are far more important than the common good.

I invite you all to join Philippine Business for Education in Education Nation, the broadest ever

Ramon R. del Rosario Jr. of the Phinma Group is the chair of Philippine Business for Education. This is an excerpt of his speech during the 2009 Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities General Assembly held at the Crowne Plaza last June 27.

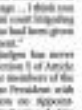
Selecting members of the judiciary

THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE QUALITIES that are required of our judges. Where are the people, the United Nations in 1987 the Committee on Crime Control and the Treatment of Offenders held at Milan adopted the principle that "persons selected for judicial office shall be individuals of integrity and ability with appropriate training or qualifications in law" (Item 10). These principles were subsequently endorsed by the Seventh Congress of Assembly Resolution 40/32 of Nov. 29, 1985 and 40/146 of Dec. 13, 1985.

The problem, though, is not what we want to find in judges, but how to find the judges with the qualities that we want. The easy part is listing what is necessary in the process of judicial selection might not have. The situation is UN endorsed principle states: "Any method of judicial selection shall safeguard against judicial appointments for improper motives. In the selection of judges, there shall be no discrimination against a person on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or status, except that a requirement, that a candidate for judicial office must be a national of the country concerned, shall not be considered discriminatory."

The hard part is determining what process ensures that judicial selection method most employ to ensure that only those applicants possessing the desired qualities are appointed to the judiciary.

In general, methods of selection used globally can be categorized as either by election or appointment, but within the two broad classes, we find a wide variety of methods. The United States, the American Bar Association observes that "few states initially select judges by appointment without a nominating commissioners. Fifteen states in



Business Matters

Ricardo J. Romulo

daily chosen judges through merit selection with a nominating committee. Eight states choose their judges through partisan election. Thirteen states choose judges through nonpartisan election, and nine states choose their judges through merit selection combined with other methods."

Between election and appointment, the case against election of judges is easy to make. Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor during an Economic Club of Phoenix luncheon early this year said, "[T]he basic precept of equal justice under the law requires that the decisions of the litigant has no undue advantage ... I think you might be concerned if you were in court litigating some issue in front of a judge who had been given a bunch of money by your opponent."

In our country, election of judges has never been a serious option. Under Section 1 of Article VIII of the 1935 Constitution, the members of the judiciary were "appointed by the President with the consent of the Commission on Appointments." The 1973 Constitution in Section 4 of its Article X makes the same assurance do the appointing power any need for advice and consent of the Commission on Appointments. As the 1986 Constitutional Commission, we came up with appointment from among a list of at least three nominees prepared by a new body called Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) without any need of confirmation (Sec. 9, Art. VIII).

After the 1986 constitution, to our say is what precisely the appointing power must look at in an aspirant besides national born citizenship, age, and legal practice to reasonably determine whether he or she is "a person of proven competence, integrity, probity and independence."

Supreme Court Justice Reynato Puno and the Supreme Court Appointments Watch have made attempts to raise the people's sentiments both on the process as well as on the standards that the JBC should use in making a list of at least three nominees to positions in the judiciary, particularly in the Supreme Court.

They asked that such cause be allowed to be set up in the hearing room so that the world would see the interviews of the JBC, that the Civil Service Commission be tapped to conduct background investigation on the applicants, that transparency be observed in the process of selection, and that the way each member would be duly published. I am in favor of all these suggestions for they tend to safeguard the selection process against secret deals, improper horse trading, as well as predetermination the essential task of background checking.

But I hasten to add that even if all these recommendations were accepted and implemented by the JBC to my knowledge, only the publication of the votes involved by the applicants on the short list has been accepted and implemented), still the measures do not touch on the exact methodology that the JBC should employ in determining the applicants are persons "of proven competence, integrity, probity and independence."

The JBC continues to need the functional equivalent of the Integrity of Disputes to be able to look into the matters listed in the order of the applicants to the judiciary. Finding that hang-up is absolutely necessary. We need to open a nationwide consultation on what parts and pieces ought to come together to construct that lamp for the JBC.

At some future opportunity, I hope to fully fill in what we in the 1986 Constitutional Commission were not in a position to supply.

Ricardo J. Romulo is a senior partner of Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & De Los Angeles.

Life, happiness

"What is the meaning of life? It is happy and joyful."
—The Dalai Lama

I HAVE DREAMED OF GOING PLACES, OF RECEIVING rich. I want my own house, car and business.

When I was still studying, I never got to ride a plane. Never ate in a fancy restaurant. Never pampered myself. So one can just imagine how eager I was to work after college for that hard, cold cash.

I wanted to do everything. I was never able to do travel, dine, shop, host treatment, facials.

Young Blood

Gladiza Lyn A. Tan

Year enough, I was able to experience those things when I landed a job. At one point, I believed money could buy happiness. I was really very happy with all the things I could afford, especially when I saw the faces of the members of my family whenever I brought home some pieces.

Three months after I started working, however, the pleasure started to erode. Either the work had changed or I did. But my work remained the same, so I guess it was I who changed.

Like most other jobs, mine was not perfect, but it was not bad either. In fact, my place of work was a haven of opportunities and challenges for a career like mine. I thought I was just experiencing a quarter-life crisis, but I wasn't. As I later discovered, I was dealing with depression.

Every day for a year, I would wake up at 5 a.m. to be early for work. I would eat breakfast and take a bath. After that I should have been on my way for the long MRT ride. Instead I would curl up in bed, and cover my head with a pillow. And at that moment, my tear glands would erupt. This would go on for a while. Until I could gather the strength to get up. Only then would I leave the house without saying goodbye to my mom.

Walking to the jeepney terminal, I would recite some small wishes: that someone would vacate his/her seat for me, or that a car would hit me (without serious injury, of course), or that I wouldn't have to go... or that I would fall and sprain my ankle. I wanted to have any valid excuse for not reporting for work.

I wished everything would stop. I wanted to get out of this life I had, right there and then. I wished the MRT ride from Taft Avenue to Quezon Avenue would take more than an hour. And then I would walk very slowly to my destination to kill time.

Once there, I had to take a deep breath before I could make every step. My body felt as heavy that I had to drag my feet. I would go straight to the restroom, sit on the toilet bowl, and stay there for several minutes so I could be by myself and not have to speak to anyone.

Back at home, I would cry myself to sleep. I cried because I had to live tomorrow as I did today. I cried because I had to live today as I did yesterday. I cried because I wasn't be happy and couldn't be. I cried because I wanted to end my life.

Everything, every minute, every second, every breath stunted sadness and worthless. I lost my purpose for living. I was out of dreams. I was out of hope. I was not longing for the work experience or the thrill of discovery, family and friends understood me only superficially. What else was there to work for? To earn for? To live for?

I felt restless and tired. But... I could not take what I was doing. I was not suited for my job and I could not make myself work. I was not happy at all there. If happiness is supposed to be what you have, I had lost that ability.

The place may be a haven, but it was not for me. I was angry with the world because it was not what I expected it to be.

But I found myself more for allowing this to happen. I know that I was blessed. I wore decent clothes, and I had a supportive family. Still unlikely, I was willing to give up all I had, while many people out there would have been willing to give up everything for what I had.

Who would think that I would experience such a great depression? I graduated summa cum laude from the University of the Philippines. And I believed I could understand every thing, do anything and overcome any challenge. But I wasn't finding in this life anymore.

What kept me going was the hope of getting out. The hope of removing the capacity to appreciate life, to be happy despite the lack of hard, cold cash. Just like in the good old times.

I thought I wanted the money and the fame. I thought that like most people, I could overlook my yearning for fulfillment while enjoying the benefits of a great career.

But I am not like most people. I own realize that what I really want is a simple, comfortable life, a happy family, healthy kids, a loving husband, a successful marriage, a master's degree, a doctorate, a medical degree. There are all I hope for now.

I continue to battle my depression. I continue to be haunted by my experience, and its memory brings me to tears. But I know that there's no other way to deal with it but to face it and events it. And sharing this might help those who are having the same experience.

To Greta I say: Have faith. Be happy. Read all the quotes you can Google that will give you strength. Never say die. Tomorrow is another day. Don't forget to eat a bowl of noodle soup.

In the end, I chose to be unemployed and to study for a master's degree. Certainly my decision was untimely, considering the country's economic situation. And where I came from, studying is an investment that still has to build a reputation a thousand upon. But I believe you must do what you have to do.

Now, I have new and with more responsibilities. I may come to believe otherwise. I may regret my choices. Heck, I may even regret writing this. But right now, following my heart suffices. In my current state, I am learning more, making new friends, and meeting different people. I'm doing what I like with so much fulfillment. And I am rekindling my life.

I will dream of going places. Someday, I will be where I want to be. It may take a long time, but I know it is worthwhile the risks. As Charles Schulz once put it: "My life has no purpose, no direction, no aim, no meaning, and yet I'm happy. I can't figure it out. What am I doing right?"

Gladiza Lyn A. Tan, 22, is taking her master's in Molecular Medicine at the St. Luke's College of Medicine-William H. Quasha Memorial.

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Many idle laws

LETTERS

ELIGIO OR PEHUEL BOOK. A doctor of profession, insists that a price control regime on medicines is the only way to keep drug prices affordable to ordinary Filipinos. (Inquirer, 7/18/09)

The power of medicine keep doing despite Republic Act 9502, also known as the Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act of 2008. Yet, Mar Roxas and business people and local governments may impact cheaper medicines directly from India, Malaysia and Indonesia with the approval of the Bureau of Food and Drugs. He added, that if quality and affordable medicines were available, pharmaceutical companies would lower their prices because of competition.

Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando said only 20 percent of the existing laws are useful because politicians do not have enough will to implement the other 80 percent.

—ELIGIO R. PAYUMO, Rosario de Subdivision, Concepcion I, Marikina City

A(H1N1), not 'swine flu'

THE LETTER PERSONS TO THE EDITOR, on June by Jose Rivera in the July 21 issue of the Inquirer. The caricature showed a "dirty and sloppy pig" which was branded "A(H1N1)," thus giving the wrong impression that pigs are the cause of the virus. In the Inquirer's July 13 issue, "swine flu" was used in the title of a news article. Again, in the July 15 issue, an article was titled "Swine flu pandemic now unstoppable: says WHO."

The World Health Organization announced on April 28, 2009 that it would stop using the term "swine flu" to avoid confusing the public about the source and cause of the flu. The announcement was made after Egypt began slaughtering thousands of pigs in a misguided effort to prevent the spread of swine flu. WHO spokesperson Dick Thompson said the agriculture industry and the US food agency had expressed concern as the previous "swine flu" was misleading consumers and needlessly causing countries to ban pork products and order the slaughter of pigs. "Nothing clean calling this swine flu ... we're going to stick with the technical scientific name H1N1 influenza A," Thompson said.

In the flu became the media's and public's favorite topic and thus made a crushing impact on swine producers and pork processors in the country. The swine industry suffered a lot of damage and it will take time for the industry to recover. (From this Foresight PR and advertising.)

Time Magazine published an article titled "Swine Flu: Don't Blame the Pig," in that article, it was emphasized that the virus should not be blamed on any species or country but rather on simple biology. Also, on the website of South Dakota and in a government of Health advisory, people are assured that pork had nothing to do with the virus. The ADTDU is Buenos virus is not spread by food. An individual cannot get the virus from eating pork and pork products are safe from the virus.

Even after WHO urged the use of the virus' technical name, A(H1N1), when referring to it, radio, television and print media continue to use the term "swine flu."

Though there is no formal or state policy banning the use of "swine flu," we appeal to the local newspapers in Indian the practice of other media. There and myself in using "A(H1N1)" when referring to this type of flu. The media play a vital role in disseminating information; they should also be responsible in feeding the public with the correct and proper information.

—ENGR. PETER ED CRUZ, president, Easy Biz/PhilJobNet Inc., 1408 Taipan Place, F. Ortigas Jr. Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605

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2 solons, ex-official with graft cases ask court OK to travel with GMA

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and TJ Burgonio

TWO LAWMAKERS AND A FORmer official who have pending graft cases with the Sandiganbayan have asked the court for permission to travel overseas as they are part of the entourage of President Macapagal-Arroyo when she goes to Washington to meet President Barack Obama on July 28.

Administration Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, who is among the group of legislators who will be attending the Presidential event, asked the antigraft court to allow him to leave for the US from July 27 to Aug. 31.

Lapid has a pending graft case with the 1st Division, filed against him in 1999 by the Presidential's sister, Cielo Macapagal-Salonga, who allegedly stole government funds to buy a P116-million property when he was still Pampanga governor.

The Office of the Ombudsman withdrew the charges last year, but the case remains pending as Judge Gloria Ramos has for reconsideration its questioning the withdrawal.

Surigao del Norte Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Matugas, who also joined Mr. Arroyo's party during her 13-day official visit to Japan and Brazil last month, is also part of the delegation.

Matugas, who also has a pending graft case, yesterday asked the court to allow him to travel too.

Meeting with other VIPs

Aside from Obama, Ms. Arroyo will be meeting with US Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates on July 31, a copy of the itinerary submitted to the court by former Pampanga Rep. Juanito Ikdonisio chair Susan Prudencio Villaroel showed.

Villaroel, who is facing graft charges over the allegedly overpriced P1.3-billion Mandaue-Mactan bridge project, also asked the court for leave to travel to Washington to meet Philippine officials and businessmen as well as Filipinos in the US.

Sandiganbayan Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, who is among the group of legislators who will be attending the Presidential event, asked the antigraft court to allow him to leave for the US from July 27 to Aug. 31.

Lapid has a pending graft case with the 1st Division, filed against him in 1999 by the President

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

MILF to reciprocate ceasefire order

COTABATO CITY—MOST guerrillas yesterday treated with caution a government order to cease offensives but said they will reciprocate today with a similar order to its field commanders.

Eid Kabalu, MILF civil-military affairs chief, said the bypass the MILF consider was in response to President Macapagal-Arroyo's order for the Army to cease offensives against the Moro separatist group.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, said the MILF leadership has agreed to reciprocate the government's "good gesture," which came four days before her term ends at the end of June.

But Iqbal said the MILF ceasefire might not take effect immediately because its field commanders have yet to be informed about it.

"There is really a need to reach out to our commanders in the field," he said.

"Compliance is never important than making hasty announcements," he said.

Iqbal said like the military, MILF forces will return to "active defense and would only fire back when provoked."

"By saying [this], our forces on the ground and those facing government soldiers will never fire the first shot," Kabalu said.

But he said while the MILF welcomes the government order, it was worried about the continued

PEOPLE displaced by the war against Moro rebels put a sign outside an evacuation center in Pagalungan to express their deepest longing—for peace to reign in their land. The evacuees, many of them farmers, have been living on donated food and supplies.

effectivity of an order to hunt down MMIG leader MILF elements.

He told the MILF considers the manifesto as aimed at the rebel group, not just at selected MILF leaders.

Iqbal said if the police action against wanted MILF commanders would continue, "misencounters" and "accidental skirmishes" were likely to occur.

"This is dangerous and this will be taken up as soon as we get engaged in the peace talks," he said.

However, the Philippine National Police said it also was suspending the operations against the wanted MILF leaders.

But PNP officials said police will continue to serve the arrest warrants for those wanted for attacks on civilian communities in July last year.

Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, who called for the cessation of hostilities shortly before Malacañang announced the ceasefire, said he was happy because there would be a pause in bloodshed.

"This gives hope to the suffering internally displaced persons, they now have something to look up to," said Quevedo, former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

North Cotabato Vice Gov. Emmanuel Pinol, however, said the government move was "stupid and crazy."

Pinol, a former MILF aide, said the government's latest move would only be used by the rebel group to strengthen its forces.

"In doing that, there will be escalation of violence and atrocities," he warned.

Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, commander of the Eastern Mindanao Command, said the order "will bring about an environment that is suitable for mutual understanding."

Ferrer supervises the massacre of MILF commander Ameril Umbra Kato in Maguindanao and Central Mindanao.

In Mindanao, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said officials hoped the ceasefire would pave the way for talks to resume.

Iqbal, however, was quoted by AP as saying talks would resume only if an international body would guarantee an accessory deal. Malaysia has been helping in the talks.

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said soldiers stationed in Mindanao will remain in their posts to continue offensives against the Abu Sayyaf. Jeffrey Marlowe and Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao with reports from Nova Quicnesonda, Jocelyn Uy, Ed Bueza and AP

Gov't offers up to P20,000 in cash to lure NPAs to surrender

NAGA CITY—THE GOVERNMENT is dangling a package that includes cash to communist guerrillas who will return to the folds of the law as hopes were raised talks between the guerrillas and government would resume.

Lt. Col. Sinsuyoh Akontiba, assistant chief of staff for civil-military operations of the 9th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, told the Inquirer that the economic package for rebels who will surrender includes an initial cash reward of P20,000.

He said the government would also provide training through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), additional P10,000-cash while on training, and livelihood assistance worth P50,000.

He said the package benefitters included the families of the rebels.

The Army official said if the rebel also surrenders firearms to the government, an additional P50,000 reward would be given for every firearm.

Akontiba said the government would also shoulder expenses for transportation and travel should the rebel and his family decide to relocate.

The guerrillas were not likely to bite the surrender package, however.

In Pinugo, Quezon, one of seven rebels who bolted the Quezon provincial jail in October last year had been killed in a clash with soldiers, the military said recently.

Lt. Lt. Celerino Frank Gapuzo, of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division based in Tinoy, Rizal, identified the slain guerrilla as one Fernando Tanagon alias Ka Ancon.

In October last year, a group of guerrillas raided the provincial jail and sprung seven of their detained comrades. One of the escaped prisoners was Tanagon.

Gapuzo said Tanagon was a squad leader of an NPA unit operating in Southern Quezon.

Jaime Escandor Jr. and Delfin Mallari, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Chief of DILG tells holders of guns: Avail of amnesty plan

LAGAO CITY—INTERIOR SECretary Ronaldo Puno has urged owners of loose firearms to avail themselves of the government's one-month amnesty on the registration of unlicensed guns beginning Oct. 1.

The Philippine National Police pegged the number of loose firearms at 1.2 million, which are in the hands of members of organized crime groups, the New People's Army and civilians.

"Gusto [firearms] out of the problem are criminality," Puno said during the peace and order council meeting attended by officials of Region Soccsksargen and Cotabato and Pagadian here on Wednesday.

He said the Department of the Interior and Local Government is confident that the new amnesty program will be achieved by 98 percent when Executive Order No. 817, or the national gun control program, takes effect from Oct. 1-31.

Puno, however, will start ahead of schedule by processing applications for license renewal, including the renewal of expired licenses on Aug. 1, to allow the PNP sufficient time to accommodate gun holders, he said.

Puno signed the implementing guidelines of the firearms amnesty on Thursday. Part of the implementing rules incorporates a reward system to those who could lead police to anyone holding loose firearms.

Citing police records, Chief Supt. Ramon Casas, Bicol police director, said the Philippines ranked 16th in the world with the highest number of homicide cases, 97.7 percent of which were committed with the use of unlicensed guns.

In the Bicol, the PNP said 26,864 unregistered firearms were in the hands of "liberal groups, criminal elements and civilian gun holders."

Mondejar revealed a major police concern in the four Bicol provinces due to the presence of blood guns and loose firearms, Casas said.

The regional police's records, however, showed a drop in gun crimes from 2006 from January to July last year to 324 during the same period this year.

Cynthia Arnaldo, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Congress urged to pass law requiring labels for GMOs

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—ERICDON GIN posing the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in farming for the compulsory labeling of products containing GMOs as a guide in consumers.

Lawyer Lilibeth Arnado of The Third World Network Forum, an international network on environmental and development issues, told the manufacturers of products with GMOs should be required to indicate its contents in the product label.

"Consumers in the Philippines do not know if the products they are buying contain GMOs and they should be provided with this information so they can choose," Arnado said in a forum on genetic engineering held in Iloilo City Wednesday.

A GMO is a plant, animal or microorganism with its genetic code changed through biotechnology to give it characteristics that it does not have.

GMOs have been used in agriculture, including the production of pest resistant and high-yielding crops and in medicines.

While its proponents see GMO production as a leap in technology and production, various sectors oppose it because of its impact on environment and health.

Arnado called on legislators to amend the Consumer Act (Republic Act 7394) so it would include the mandatory labeling of products containing GMOs.

She said measures like these were necessary in the absence of a law in the country regulating the production and the use of GMOs.

The only regulation is contained in Department of Agriculture Order No. 8 issued in 2002, which regulates the importation of GMO products.

Catalio Beltran, a Mindanao scientist and research associate at the Siem Zealand-based Center for Integrated Research in Monterey, said at the forum that there was an urgent need to raise public awareness on the impact of GMOs on the environment, health, agriculture and food security.

Beltran said the Philippines was one of 33 countries that have allowed entry of GMO products, including corn, potato, canola, sugar beet, soybean, cotton and alfalfa.

3 killings revive fears of return of death squads

DIGOS CITY—A 27 YEAR OLD man was shot dead by a masked gunman here on Wednesday, raising suspicion that a vigilante group that has been blamed for the killings of at least 900 people in Southern Mindanao since the 1990s has become active again.

Al Amen Magarang Abdullah was playing computer games in an Internet café on Rizal Crossing Street here around 9:30 p.m. when the gunman arrived with another companion and shot him dead, Chief Insp. Anthony Pichay, city police director, said.

Quoting witnesses, Pichay said the gunman casually entered the Internet café and shot Magarang, killing him instantly.

Some residents, who spoke to the Inquirer, said Abdullah's death could be the work of the so-called Digos Death Squad.

The Digos Death Squad is the supposed local version of the Davao Death Squad, whose activities were attributed by investigated by the Commission on Human Rights.

But Supt. Pichay said police were looking at love triangle as the motive behind the killing.

Abdullah was the third victim of unidentified armed men in Davao del Sur this week.

Also on Wednesday, police found two suspected victims of summary executions in Magsaysay and Hagonoy towns in Davao del Sur.

One of the victims, a tricycle driver, was being sought for his alleged involvement in robberies, according to the family.

Superior Charles, 30, died as he was being brought to the hospital.

Before Charles was found, police also announced the discovery of a male body in the town.

Senior Insp. Edilbe Mayol, Magsaysay police chief, said the half-undressed body bore gunshot wounds. *Efilo Aguirre and Orlando Arisay, Inquirer Mindanao*

POLICE presence on a road leading to Davao City is announced by this checkpoint in York. A series of killings of crime suspects, however, has sent a wave fearful message to other groups in the city and Digos and raised fears of protests from human rights advocates.

INQUIRER Visayas

E-mail us: ... Website: ...
Editor Jim Bandigan
Bureau Chief Trifonio L. Benedicto

MARIO Abayon, director of the Board of the National Council on Disability Affairs together with Janine Bolivo, president of the Association of Differently-abled Persons of San Miguel and Rea Barbin, outgoing president of the Iloilo Provincial Federation of Differently-abled Persons, Inc.

From pity to opportunity for 'differently abled'

By Hazel P. Villa
Iloilo City

REX BARRIER'S BRITtle bones make him shorter and feebler as the years go by. Maida Abayque uses crutches because of polio. Janine Solitario has a stump for a left hand.

Their growing-up years were marked with ridicule and up to this day, people still stare or look on with pity. But the three have gone beyond that as persons with disabilities (PWDs) took center stage at the General Assembly and Election of Officers of the Iloilo Provincial Federation of Differently-abled Persons, Inc. (IPFDAP).

Wednesday (July 22) was the perfect venue day for International Disability Week and Barbin, the outgoing president of the IPFDAP was set to deliver his report in the presence of 75 participants representing the 26 PWD associations in Iloilo province and three local government units.

Before this, Abayque, a director of the Board of the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) delivered a short Powerpoint presentation.

"Our organizations must have missions, visions and goals. We have to be responsible and accountable to regulators and the general public. If we manage our programs and projects well, others people will be willing to help," said Abayque, also the regional national representative of the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

Abayque reminded like he was in the boardroom of some top multinational company urging executives to push forward. Indeed, it was nothing short of this to be pointed out the importance of leadership and good governance in managing PWD associations.

Grooming

Solito, president of the Association of Differently-abled Persons of San Miguel, followed up the pep talk with personality development and leadership skills, making the PWDs laugh with the suggestion to "reinforce hair"—referring to proudly standing tresses they have to lead.

Solito, personable, and scrupulous in the extreme, reminded the PWDs to help each other and to be good examples of persons with disabilities.

The atmosphere on the fifth floor of the provincial capitol that hosted the general assembly was one of empowerment and opportunity as PWDs can self-pity away, replacing it with the thirst of hope and dreams.

The PWDs in Iloilo have a reason to celebrate. After all, several decades ago, they did not have any organizations in their towns to look after their needs, they didn't even have curb cuts; and, worse, they suffered inferiority and humiliation from their own families' and communities' intolerant ways.

This time, a representative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) gave a talk on how PWDs may avail themselves of a five-percent discount in basic necessities and prime commodities "under the jurisdiction of the DTI and the Department of Agriculture" effective February this year.

This assembly was not a mere get-together as the PWD stood up to acquire 11 Iloilo LGU leadership and grocery stores know about this special discount—to which trade and industry development specialist Elena Marchinete replied, "We have already sent letters to your LGUs and it is their job to inform stores in their areas as well as price purchase bookkets."

This sets off more questions and a rash of discussions.

The PWDs are not strangers to the specifications of the government and the bureaucracy, and the time-dragging that go with the implementation of programs and projects than the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons calls for.

Medical discount

The PWDs are also aware that as of May 26, 2009, an administrative order from the Department of Health (DOH) secretary has given guidelines for the implementation of the "medical and related discounts and special privileges" for the PWDs after the Magna Carta was amended to include a Chapter 5 for that purpose.

This means that the PWDs are now entitled not least a 20 percent discount when buying medicines in all drugstores, 20 percent discount on medical and dental services, including diagnostic and laboratory fees in all government facilities, and 20 percent discount on the same services in all private hospitals and medical facilities.

All these would be implemented in accordance with the rules and regulations to be issued by the DOH in coordination with Philhealth, said Health Secretary Francisco Duque.

While discussing the assembly's motion to the Magna Carta was not part of the agenda, the PWDs at the assembly shared their stories with much head-shaking regarding how some have experienced snags in getting discounts, but were one in stating that leaving the "disabled" tag is better than leaving no tag at all.

The Iloilo PWDs are, in fact, lucky to be aware of what's going on, many of their peers elsewhere do not even know that they have to be registered as PWDs with their LGUs to be able to get an identification card and other necessary papers to avail themselves of privileges and discounts.

For the Christian Blind Mission (CBM), one of the leading professional organizations for people with disabilities worldwide supporting 1,000 projects in 113 countries, a profile mapping and registration of the PWDs all over the archipelago is necessary.

Barney Mcglade, national coordinator for the CBM's Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in the Philippines, said the lack of a national survey on the PWDs had hampered development efforts for this minority.

The CBM is currently working on the CBR as a strategy to meet the needs of the PWDs in their communities wherein the community-led LGU is equipped with programs and projects that would address the PWDs and their family, but instead of having them go elsewhere for education, services, rehabilitation or medical help.

For Mcglade, this was real empowerment that would meet the PWDs into being useful members of communities that consider them out of their own.

With its programs and projects for the PWDs, Iloilo is slowly picking up on the empowerment theme and as provincial administrator Manuel Mejaredo says, he wishes for the time when "there will be no pity for the disabled."

Dante Varona: Now 15 and still pint-sized

By Joey A. Galinato
Abyanga, Leyte

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Dante Varona continues to draw attention from people who only want to gawk at him.

The reason is obvious: He is still pint-sized.

A dozen years ago, Dante, who was named after an action star who rose to stardom in the 1980s by diving into the sea from the San Juanico Bridge, had his brief moment of fame because of his small physique. Now a teenager, he remains diminutive and an object of curiosity.

"There are still people coming here from other places as far as Ormoc (Leyte) and Maasin (Southern Leyte) who visit us. They are looking for Dante, wondering if he is still small and he is OK," but his 9-year-old mother Benita Varona said.

The Varonas live in Untoc, a mole village 6 km from the town proper of Abuyog, where call-to-action men dwell the houses of 1,318 residents. Abuyog is one of Leyte's poorest towns.

At 15, Dante weighed 11.2 pounds and stood a little over 2 feet (25 inches) when a medical program dubbed "Operation Timbang" was initiated recently by the municipality.

When he was first featured in the Inquirer Visayas in 1997, he stood at 22.8 cm. (9 inches) and weighed 600 grams or less than a pound, said his mother, who was once a barangay health worker.

Benita said she had two sons who, her third child was born so small. The rest of her children were all "normal."

She was 44 when she gave birth to Dante on Sept. 23, 1993, at Abuyog's low-income city clinic.

"Perhaps it was the work of the chemicals (insecticide)," her nephew, Inquirer Correspondent Zaldy Comboy, 29, said.

"But I would not mind if a child of mine would look like him," Comboy, a father of two, said.

Pituitary gland

Dr. Florimon Tagoncon, who attended to the delivery of Dante, said Dante's condition could be attributed to an underdeveloped pituitary gland.

Also known as the master gland, the pituitary gland controls many body functions, including growth, metabolism, sexual function, reproduction and the body's response to stress. Bite-sized and reddish-gray, it is at the center of the brain, just above the back of the nose.

"The anterior part of Dante's pituitary gland was not developed. That is why he was born like that. And with his physical condition, he is (prone) to developing respiratory tract infection so his immune system was not also developed," Tagoncon said.

Based on medical studies, he said, a person with the same physical conditions as Dante's has a very short life span. Dante's family, however, hopes that he will live to a ripe old age.

In the meantime, Dante continues to bring joy to his family and friends.

Happy childhood

"He is a happy child. He plays around with children, all younger than him," Benita said.

One of Dante's playmates is his 5-year-old cousin, Edwin, who is taller than him. Their playground is their backyard.

"Sometimes he plays by himself pretending to be a basher, or big. He small hands in his imaginary universe," Benita said.

When the Inquirer visited the Varonas on Wednesday, Dante was not there because he was invited by Bay Odchigue, a businessman who developed Endeon for the teenager. Odchigue lives in Barangay Ormocay, more than 4 km away.

Odchigue said she had brought Dante along with her whenever she would go to Iloilo, where her family now stays.

When a daughter celebrated her 18th birthday last year in Odchigue invited Dante as an entertainer.

"He entertained the guests by dancing. He made it a point to have his performance at the last hour so that our guests would not go home early," Odchigue said.

Meal of 5 spoonfuls

On the day Dante was at their house, she fed him with pancit (noodles) and tender meat, as she has has no teeth.

Using his tiny and fragile left hand, Dante ate with a spoon. After finishing five spoonfuls, Dante slumped on the cushion, pointing at his belly to indicate that he was full. He later played with cards.

He spoke with a very thin voice, uttering incomprehensible words only his family and those close to him could understand or interpret.

Worry

Benita said she and her husband Francisco, 43, were worried about Dante son's physical condition.

"We are now old and sickly. Who will attend to him if we're no longer around? That thought really gives us sleepless nights. I cannot imagine how he can survive alone, for they have their own families to attend to," the would mother said.

Their worries would give whenever Dante got sick. An early fever or flu would take turns to drive weeks before fevers could recover, Benita said.

Benita admitted that her son's condition had brought them some financial relief.

From donations given by visitors, their once nondescript hut of nipa and wood is now made of hollow blocks and has GI roofing.

But she insisted that she and her husband were not employing Dante to make money.

"We are still poor. We still depend on crops as our sources of income," Francisco said.

Just recently, the small "servant (maid)" once they put up early this year closed down due to financial hardships.

Children's vocal group in Negros wins medals

By Carlo P. Gomez
Bacolod City

A CHILDREN'S VOcal group based in Negros won five medals in the 2009 World Championship of Performing Arts (WCOPA) held in Los Angeles, California from July 13-19.

Bacolod City Mayor Evelio Leonardia said on Sunday that the Young Voices of Negros Bernese Arts Study had informed him about the good news.

The WCOPA website www.worldchampionships.com said the group won two gold medals in the Broadway Musicals and Traditional Jazz and three silver medals for gospel, open and pop, all in the 11-12 age category.

The group includes the Madrigal siblings Ms. Anna Katrina, Ms. Anne Kristi and Kristine Philomene, and Nina Mae Manova, all students of the Maestro Art Studio-Jpal Music Productions and Performing Arts.

Gonzaga said the children would serve as an inspiration for others to aspire to become the best in what they do.

The World Championship of Performing Arts is an annual talent competition, which is judged on the basis of acting, singing, dancing, modelling, instruments and a variety of categories.

Meanwhile, Filipino Rhap-Soloist also won in the 2000 Junior Grand Champion Pro Dancer of the World after he won the gold in five competitions such as the male vocal, broadway, male vocal gospel, male vocal open, male vocal pop and male vocal rhythm and blues/soul/jazz for the 11-12 category.

Other Filipino performing artists who have won the global competitions's top prizes are Jed Madela (2003 Grand Champion Vocalist of the World) and Grand Champion Performer of the World), Cornade Stores (2006 Grand Champion Group Vocalists of the World) and Raymond Sajor (2007 Grand Champion Vocalist of the World), Aria Gimenez (2007 Grand Champion Vocalist of the World and Grand Champion Performer of the World), Christopher Lee (2008 Grand Champion Vocalist of the World and Grand Champion Performer of the World).

MEDALISTS Alana Mae Manova and the Madrigal siblings Kristephenson, Ms. Anna Katrina and Ms. Anne Kristi, who visited Mayor Evelio Leonardia (center) before leaving for the world competition in the US.

THE SMALL manager in the loving arms of his mother Benita.

NEWS

Palace reverses DOJ in drug case

By Tarra Quismundo

IN MOVING IT WAS HEROES IN ITS campaign against illegal drugs, Malacañang has overturned the justice department's dismissal of a drug peddling case police filed against three suspects in April, invoking a resolution that cited presidential lapses committed in their arrest.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, in a resolution dated July 1, ordered the Department of Justice (DOJ) to undertake another review of the case filed by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) against Alejandro Mosarin, Ashari Comsil and Fahad Comsil in April.

The case had been elevated to Malacañang, which is empowered to undertake automatic reviews of dismissed drug cases, after the DOJ upheld on April 17 a resolution by the San Juan City Prosecutor's Office's dismissing the complaint.

The San Juan city prosecutor, in later affirmed by DOJ upon review, had dropped charges against the three, citing the CIDG's failure to account for drug evidence on the site of arrest with witnesses from the media, accredited officials, or a DOJ representative, as prescribed by the 2002 anti-drug law.

Buy-bust

Operatives of the CIDG-National Capital Region arrested the three in a buy-bust operation on April 7 in a restaurant in Greenhills, San Juan following a tip received by police.

Records showed that Mosarin and Ashari Comsil were both natives of Iligan City while Fahad Comsil hailed from Lanao del Sur. The three were reportedly related, police said.

Gibo closer to being admin bet

By TJ Burgonio, Jocelyn R. Uy and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HE'S OFF TO A FIERY START

In an oath-taking boldly interrupted by an accidental fire, Defense Secretary Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro yesterday took the first step toward clinching the administration's endorsement as its presidential standard-bearer in the May 2010 elections.

Teodoro, who is hoping to become the second defense chief to occupy the country's highest post, took his oath as member of the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD before Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita at the party's headquarters in Cubao.

The oath-taking was narrow and took place inside a cramped conference room that left party leaders and guests sweating.

"Nothing can ever describe what I'm feeling right now because of the souls we've come you have chosen me," he later told party officials and members, eliciting loud, fist-pumping cheers.

But comments that this must be due to the warm room temperature.

'Inadequate facilities'

Gabriel Claudio, party secretary general, tried to make light of the "inadequate facilities" as he spelled out the significance of the event.

"Today is a very auspicious one as we welcome him into our ranks. With the entry of Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, it signals our party entering into high gear in our preparation for the elections of 2010 as well as putting into high gear and putting in the finishing touches to the selection process," he said.

But the party is not yet closing the doors to party and non-party members, including Vice President Noli de Castro, according to Claudio.

In an interview with reporters, Teodoro said he would respect and support the decision of his party if ever it opted not to choose him as its standard bearer.

"I have to support the party decision, whatever that is," he said.

Teodoro, who trained the trade of his father at the Ateneo de Naga, said Ermita, before the oath-taking, was accompanied by his wife Rep. Monica "Nikki" Prieto-Teodoro, son Jamie and mother Dina.

Prieto-Teodoro later took her oath as Lakas-CMD member.

Lakas-Kampi members lionized praises on the 44-year-old Defense Secretary as a "leader of the new generation" who, despite logging behind in the survey, boasted of excellent academic achievements being a bar topnotcher and a Harvard graduate.

In his speech, Ermita said Teodoro's oath-taking was just the first step of his journey with the party. He said he made the right decision.

Midway through his speech, a loud burst scrapped over the buffet table as TV crews jostled for good position, setting the table cloth on fire and causing a commotion. But it was put out in minutes.

No burned bridges

Teodoro said he joined the party because he believed in its principles.

"I did not just join a party but a movement ... we are in a movement now where we have the power and opportunity to collectively seek true reforms and peace in our country," said Teodoro in a speech at the Club Filipino in San Juan City after the oath-taking.

Teodoro had earlier bolted the Nacionalista People's Coalition (NPC) of his uncle, Jejomar Cojuangco.

But Teodoro claimed that he has not burned his bridges with his uncle.

"A while ago, somebody asked me if I had burned any bridges, I replied that I have not burned any bridge, I only added a new bridge," Teodoro said. NPC is a member of the incumbent coalition in the House led by Lakas-Kampi.

As a core member of the administration's bloc, Teodoro yesterday vowed to commit himself to the "economic humanist ideology," taking no shine and implementing policies according to the interests of the country.

He would also implement the principles of good governance by implementing sound institutions and putting moral people there as well.

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulandey

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Ex-Camanava cop officer arrested for bank blasts

By Beverly T. Hatividad

A DISMISSED POLICE OFFICER has been arrested in connection with the series of explosions that rocked some banks in the Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela) area early in the month.

The Northern Police District (NPD) identified the former police officer as Leandro J. Bongcaras, a resident of Dona Nazaria, Kaybiga, Caloocan City.

NPD director general Samuel Pagdilao Jr. said Bongcaras has been tagged as a primary suspect for the synchronized blasts at nine Allied Bank branches in Caloocan and Valenzuela on July 15 and the explosion at the ATM booth of a Union Bank branch in Marulas, Valenzuela, on July 13.

Pagdilao said Bongcaras is a foreign-trained bomb expert and technician who used to be a member of the SWAT Special Weapons and Tactics) and Bomb Squad of Caloocan and Valenzuela police stations.

He was dismissed from the police service in 2004 for involvement in a string of robberies in the Camanava area and other parts of Metro Manila.

Pagdilao said in an interview that Bongcaras was positively identified by at least three witnesses as the man responsible for the seven blasts in Camanava.

One burglary driver, who had witnessed the explosion at Union Bank along MacArthur Highway, had identified Bongcaras as the person who threw an explosive in front of the bank's ATM booth from a region gallery and later ran in a police lineup.

Two other witnesses had also positively identified Bongcaras as the man who hurled an explosive at the Allied Bank branch in Caloocan.

The suspect was arrested last July 22 by virtue of two standing warrants of arrest issued against him by two Valenzuela regional trial court judges for separate cases of robbery with homicide and robbery with threats and intimidation.

Authorities had also found tools for making an improvised explosive device, electrical valves, dismantled cell phone and cell phone chargers during a search of the suspect's residence. These evidences are now being examined by the district's crime laboratory.

Pagdilao said Bongcaras will be charged with arson and illegal possession of explosives.

17 'hot' cars, bikes recovered by NCRPO within two weeks

By Nico Catherine Calleja

SEVENTEEN VEHICLES REPORTED to have been stolen years ago were recovered by operatives of the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) in a span of two weeks after the end of the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

The "hot" cars and motorcycles were lined up in front of the NCRPO administration building on Friday morning in Metro Manila police commander Roberto Rosales announced what he considered a "major accomplishment in the campaign against carnapping and syndicates fueling LTO documentation."

One of the vehicles shown to the media is a Range Rover with a fake plate number 6, which was recovered from a certain Mark Chua.

On the other hand, owner of the motorcycles were announced from a house of Dante Chua in a joint operation of the NCRPO and the Tanauan (Batangas) Police on Quezon City last Wednesday.

The raid also yielded 120 certificates of registration, official receipts, two patrols with magazines and five unlicensed guns.

After failing to present necessary documents, Dante Chua's nephew Jimmy Chua voluntarily turned over a Ford 101, a Mitsubishi Lancer Truck, and a Honda CBR.

The suspects, Chua and Chua, will be charged with carnapping and falsification of public documents, Rosales said.

Mark Chua, on the other hand, has been charged in the San Juan prosecutor's office.

Bike rider without helmet dies in Pasig

A MOTORCYCLE RIDER WHO was not wearing a protective helmet was killed after smashing into the center island of Ortigas Ave. in Pasig City before dawn yesterday.

Daniel Asuncion, a resident of 120 San Agustin St., Bahayan II, Panghulohan in Pasig City, sustained massive injuries and died instantly.

Bobby Corona, a member of the city rescue team, said Asuncion was thrown off his bike several meters away from the crash site. He added Asuncion could have survived if he had worn a helmet. *Beverly T. Hatividad*

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Petitioners vs stay of oil depot eye Comelec help

By Tina E. Santos

PETITIONERS OF THE 1986 pile's initiative against Ordinance 8107, which allows the Pandacan oil depots and other pollutive and hazardous industries to continue operating in Manila, intend to submit their petition to the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

This developed as the 20-day period for the Manila City Council to take action on the petition lapsed last July 23, according to Councilor Ma. Lourdes Isip-Garcia.

She said that following the submission of the petition to the Committee on Legal Study to examine if it gather signatures within 90 days representing at least 10 percent of the total registered voters of Manila, with a minimum 2 percent of registered voters per legislative district.

"Then the Comelec would hold a referendum for the people of Manila to approve or reject our proposition," Garcia said.

Last June 23, the group Manileños Kontra Abuso (MKA) and other civic government organizations, including socio-civic and religious groups, lawyers' and environment advocates' group as well as ordinary citizens, in filing the petition at the Manila City Council.

The petitioners said the move was based on local Government Code of 1991 and Republic Act 6735 (Initiative and Referendum Act) which provided procedures that must be followed in cases where registered voters may directly propose, enact, amend or repeal an existing ordinance.

Attached to the petition was the over 3,000 signatures of proponents, who are registered voters of Manila.

Military has no respect for GMA

GOVERNMENT SERVICE INsurance System (GSIS) president Winston Garcia said nine other officials have been cleared of graft charges involving the purchase of Asia Land and Pentacific Mountain properties for P55.5 million.

The Commission on Audit (COA) found the paintings' price excessive.

But the Court of Appeals (CGA) upheld the Ombudsman's decision dismissing the complaint against Garcia et al. filed by some GSIS employees.

If the CGA finds the Ombudsman of fraud by a government agency executive or misconduct, then it is because COA is the watchdog on government spending.

Spending P55.5 million as Asia Land and Amorsolo paintings was the height of extravagance.

It's as if Imelda Marcos bought those paintings.

The appellate court said the Office of the Ombudsman apparently don't know how much is P55.5 million.

On Target

Zarate

It no wonder the government is always in default.

* * *

It seems nobody at the Bureau of Customs' token cohort from Finance Secretary Gary Teves.

The finance secretary is the big boss of two major revenue collection agencies, the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

Tesoro' order to customs officials to engobble the auctioning off of seized fine cosmetics of luxurious mean products has not been obeyed.

The seized goods consist of 22,823 cases of Hennet luncheon meat cost worth P13 million.

If the food cargo stays in a customs warehouse for a long period it may become spoiled and no longer fit for human consumption.

The Bureau secretary's order to auction off the goods was made last year, but his order has fallen on deaf ears.

* * *

Despite the appointment by many, including former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, Presidential adviser Jesus Dureza, that every effort to impose martial law — if there indeed is a plan — will not be obeyed by the armed forces.

Unlike Ferdinand Marcos, who was supported by the military because he was a former soldier, GMA is looked upon with condemnation by many in the military.

In them, she's just another housewife who became their commander in chief by another twist of cruel fate.

Many remember her as a woman who cried during a bitter exchange of words with then Sen. Ernesto Maceda.

Let Defensor, next to nonsense machismo.

Why would soldiers follow orders from a cry baby?

* * *

Let me tell GMA how most members of the elite military rank. Our Philippine Marines, proud they are.

When Marines enlisted personnel run her on the TV screen at their barracks, they roll like hyenas and make a "dirty finger" at her image.

They do that in the presence of their officers who don't stop them.

Parking fee scheme pushed

By Julie M. Aurelio

QUEZON CITY PARKING FEE scheme proponent Councilor Jesse Bunag yesterday vowed to have the controversial measure passed even at the risk of losing in next year's polls.

In a public hearing yesterday Bunag defended his proposal, saying he had no political reasons in anchoring it.

"This ordinance is not meant to raise revenues for the city but for regulatory purposes only. It indeed it would raise in P2 billion in income, then we don't need to collect business taxes anymore," he said.

Bunag added, "I will push through with the ordinance even if it means losing votes in the process."

Bunag was questioning claims by the Southern Luzon to Pay Parking in Quezon City that the proposed ordinance was ill-timed and ill advised.

MetroBriefs

1 dead in midday ambush

ASSISTANT of the Bureau of Corrections was killed while his cousin was seriously hurt in a midday ambush by motorcycle-riding men Friday in Manila, Mildred Rojuras, 39, a staff of the Manila International Container Port (MICP) legal department, at 21 28 Sixth C. Bagalang St., Malate, died instantly from multiple bullet wounds in the head and body. His cousin, Alexis Higuney, remains in critical condition at the Ospital ng Maynila from a gunshot wound in the back of the head. The injured had been also transferred to an undisclosed hospital. MPD director Chief Supt. Rodolfo Magbuhay said the Higuney cousins were aboard a red Yamaha Fronte power (TDF-688) and was about to park in front of a convenience store near their home at around 12:40 p.m. when two men aboard a motorcycle approached the vehicle, pulled out guns and started shooting at Higuney's vehicle before fleeing. Jeannette I. Andrade

2 hurt in shooting incident

A GRADE school pupil and a young woman are now in serious condition for multiple gunshot wounds after an armed man indiscriminately fired a gun Thursday morning in Barangay Payatas A, Quezon City. Police identified the victims as Mark Cedric Jacapon, 12, and Jessica Vergonia, 20, both residents of Lupac Jacinto Street. The suspect, police said, was walking along the street at around 8:15 p.m. when the unidentified man drew out a pumpal car and pointed shot gun and fired at the street, hitting the victims. Marco C. Carvajal

Limited US Embassy operations

THE US Embassy will suspend visa interviews and reception services until further notice because of Roxas Boulevard and adjacent roads on that date. Some other consular services, including American Citizen Services, will be available. The embassy's economic administration offices will remain open for business as usual. The Thomas Jefferson Information Center, public affairs section, and other management units located outside of the high-security zone on the chancery and eastern compounds on Roxas Boulevard will be open, but with reduced staffing. Other embassy offices located outside the walkroom and chancery will be open.

Double efforts vs drug threat

THE TAGUIG police have doubled its efforts to curb the threat of drug-addiction as some of its men have been subjected to harassment and threats by members of drug syndicates. Senior Supt. Camilo Cascolan, Taguigpolice chief, said in a statement that he has directed his men to maintain an active role in the suppression of drug operations in relation to the shootout and peddling of illegal substances in the city. But he admitted that some of his men were receiving threats through text messages by suspected members of drug syndicates, many of whom are facing trials for drug possession and sale. Willie Catherine Calleja

British police still guilty of racism, says report

LONDON—RACIAL DISCRIMINATION remains a problem for police and in certain areas has gotten worse a decade after a damning report said Britain's biggest force was guilty of "institutional racism," a commissioner of Metropolitan Police said Wednesday.

In 1999, a judicial inquiry by William Macpherson into the murder of 18-year-old black student Stephen Lawrence outlined a catalogue of failures by London's police force, accusing it of "professional incompetence" and identifying "institutional racism."

Lawrence was stabbed to death by a gang of white youths at a bus stop in Eltham, southeast London, in April 1993. The case sparked a public outcry after serious police errors meant no one has ever been convicted over the killing.

The Home Affairs Committee said the police had since made "tremendous strides" in the service provided to ethnic minorities, in dealing with racism among officers, and had implemented 67 of Macpherson's 70 recommendations.

But its report said failings remained.

Those in black communities were far more likely to be stopped and searched by police, with the situation worse than in 1999, and they were excessively represented on the National DNA database, which retains DNA samples from anyone who is arrested.

The committee's report said the Equalities and Human Rights Commission estimated that more than 30 percent of all black men were on the database, compared with about 10 percent of all white men.

"We congratulate the police on the strides they have made in tackling the institutional racism identified by the Macpherson report 10 years ago," said committee chair Keith Vaz.

"However, while there is such blatantly disproportionate representation of particularly black people in the criminal justice system ... there will continue to be damage to community relations which in turn undermines police work."

The report said police would also fail to meet a target of employing seven percent of officers from ethnic minorities nationally by 2009.

Furthermore, ethnic officers still had difficulties in getting promotion and were more likely to face disciplinary proceedings.

Last year Britain's most senior Asian police officer, former London Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur, settled a claim for racial discrimination against the force.

He was paid an unspecified sum of money and in return withdrew allegations of racism against senior officers.

The capital's Black Police Association also urged minority recruits to boycott the force, saying there were fewer ethnic minority staff to senior positions than before the Macpherson report.

"We acknowledge that there will always be more we need to do to continue to equality and diversity," said Steve Orver from the Association of Chief Police Officers.

He said a new strategy to outline priorities on the issue would be published later in the year. *Reuters*

Police say 3rd bomb in Jakarta hotel attacks malfunctioned

JAKARTA, INDONESIA—A TIMED HOME-made bomb was set to go off before suicide bombers blew themselves up at two hotels in Jakarta last week but malfunctioned, police said on Friday, indicating another terror attack on earlier terrorist attacks in Indonesia.

The device—a laptop filled with explosives and bolts—was found on the 20th floor of the JW Marriott and was supposed to go off first, Inspector Gen. Togar Sianipar, a police spokesman, said.

The explosion would likely have sent pan-cakes flying in the ground floors, where the two suicide attackers detonated their explosives packs.

"It is clear that the bomb found inside the hotel was equipped with a timer that showed the time of the (failed) explosion," Sianipar said. "It was supposed to explode before the other ones."

Last Friday's near simultaneous explosions at the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton killed seven people and wounded more than 50, breaking a nearly four-year lull in terrorist activity in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation. The two bombers, believed to have been associated with the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah, also died.

No one—even leaders of suspects have been picked up on ongoing, nationwide manhunt that is also targeting Malaysian fugitive Noordin Mohammad Top, the alleged mastermind of four major bombings in Indonesia.

Jemaah Islamiyah used a combination of stationary, timed explosives and suicide bombers in the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings that killed more than 220 people. The group was also blamed for the first bombing of the JW Marriott in 2003 and no attack on the Australian Embassy in 2004.

A widespread crackdown by counterterrorism forces has netted hundreds of militants in recent years in Indonesia, and the group was believed to have virtually expired until now.

But Ind Poldasi stands showed that terrorists are still able to strike high-security targets in the heart of the capital, averting fears that more bombings may follow. *AP*

KASHMIRI Muslims offer prayers outside the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, India, on July 24, as the head priest, unseen, displays a holy relic believed to be a hair from the beard of Prophet Mohammad. AP

US global image vastly improving under Obama, except among Muslims

WASHINGTON—THE US IMAGE has vastly improved in much of the world thanks largely to the election of Barack Obama as president, although many Middle East nations remain wary of the United States, a survey said on Thursday.

While America's image has been dramatically boosted around the globe, strong reservations are still harbored by Muslims, who continue to view the United States in a largely unfavorable light, according to a study by researchers at the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project.

"Nationality toward the US... continues to run deep and unabated in Turkey, the Palestinian territories and Pakistan," said the report, which conducted nearly 27,000 interviews from May 18 to June 16 among 24 nations and the Palestinian territories.

Some Muslim and Middle Eastern countries have a slightly improved view of the United States under Obama, whose father was Muslim and who has engaged in greater amounts of outreach to the Islamic world than his predecessors in the White House.

Pakistan and the Palestinian territories, however, registered only a marginally improved perception of the United States, while Egypt and Jordan posted a strong improvement in public attitudes toward America.

The Pew study found a strong improvement in the US image in Western Europe and Canada, where those surveyed expressed confidence that Obama will get the United States to take action on climate change.

Among European countries, Germany showed the most improved view of America, jumping from a 31 percent favorable rating in 2008 to 64 percent now.

Large improvements in America's favorability rating were also found in Spain, Britain and France.

Only about one Russian in three expressed confidence in the new US president, a less modest, but no less prominent over Bush, who polled just 23 percent.

Israel stood out as the only country in the survey where Obama's public image has worsened, the Pew pollsters found.

In Asia, the biggest jump to 93 favorability numbers was found in Indonesia, where Obama spent part of his childhood, and which views him as something of a native son. *AFP*

Swine flu may cause seizures in kids, says US

THE NATION'S TOP PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS are alerting doctors that swine flu may cause seizures, after four children were hospitalized in Texas for neurological complications.

All four children fully recovered without complications after being treated at a Dallas hospital, according to a report released on Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The announcement did not surprise doctors accustomed to seeing complications in the brain caused by the seasonal flu viruses that circulate every year.

"It's completely to be expected given that as the [swine] H1N1 flu is behaving like the seasonal flu that we are familiar with," said Dr. Anne Mazonas, a professor of pediatrics and microbiology at the Weill Cornell Medical Center.

Because flu-related brain complications are more common in children than adults and swine flu seems to affect children more often than adults, public health officials experts expect to see more cases of children who develop swine-flu-related neurological complications as the pandemic continues.

Parents should not be alarmed, Mazonas said, but if they notice a change in their child's personality or behavior, like increased irritability or memory problems, seizures or unusual drowsiness, it might be swine-flu related and parents should alert their child's doctor as early as possible.

In the four children described in the disease control report, neurological problems, including seizures, confusion and delirium, followed the onset of respiratory symptoms between two and seven days. The symptoms were less severe than those previously described in the medical literature as associated with seasonal flu, according to the report.

Neurological complications in children are among the most serious side effects of influenza, said Dr. Andrew T. Pavia, chief of pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Utah. Milder complications like seizures or brain swelling are moderately common, whereas death occurs in only a couple of cases each year, Pavia said. *AFP*

Karadzic says Srebrenica massacre toll exaggerated

THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS—FORMER Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic said on Thursday he wants access to DNA from mass graves in an attempt to show that the death toll in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of Muslims now has been exaggerated.

Karadzic has indicated in a series of pre-trial hearings before the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal that he will struggle to challenge the truth of some of the most notorious atrocities of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war. He alleged in one instance that mortar attacks that killed scores in a Sarajevo market were carried out by Muslim fighters instead of Serbs.

Prosecutors have not commented on the strategy.

They have charged Karadzic with genocide for allegedly masterminding the mass slayings in Srebrenica, which are considered Europe's worst atrocity since World War II.

Karadzic told a pretrial hearing that his access to DNA retrieved from mass graves became key because he believes the toll of Bosnian Muslims killed by Serb forces during seven weeks in July 1995 in the former UN-protected enclave is "thousands" below the widely accepted figure of almost 8,000.

His comments enraged survivors who lost family members in the massacre.

Munira Subasic, head of the Association Mothers of Srebrenica, who is still looking for the bones of her son Nermin, was upset when she heard that Karadzic is questioning the death toll.

"I cannot believe that I still do not know the remaining mass graves are, she said.

Karadzic contended that some people found in the mass graves with bound hands were executed. He suggested that others may have died in combat when Bosnian Serbs overran the enclave or in fighting between Bosnian Muslim forces years earlier.

"We have to establish the truth about when somebody died, whether they died in 1992, 1993 or 1995, whether they were killed in combat or executions," he said. *AP*

A BOSNIAN forensic team investigates a mass grave site in Kamenske Bojove, near the Bosnian town of Travnik, on July 23. The bodies are believed to belong to nearly 500 Bosnian Muslims who were allegedly killed by Bosnian Serb police forces in 1992 and thrown in a 200-meter deep ravine. AP

Memoir of UK spy offers no apology

CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND—AFTER keeping it sealed for 25 years, the British Library made on Thursday a 30,000-word memoir in which Anthony Blunt, one of Britain's most renowned 20th-century art historians, described spying for the Soviet Union, available to the public.

The memoir offers few new insights into the details of Blunt's spying, about which he told little in public before he died in 1983. In main interest, according to historians, lies in Blunt's account of his recruitment by another Soviet spy, Guy Burgess, when both were at Cambridge University in the 1930s, and in his exposition of his motives and feelings, including his disillusionment with Stalinism and the Soviet Union after World War II.

The memoir, intended by Blunt as a testament to family and friends, was given to the library in 1964 by the executor of Blunt's will, John Golding, on the condition that it be kept secret for 25 years.

The moment's note of regret for the price Blunt paid personally for betraying his country, coupled with the absence of any apology in Blunt who suffered as a result of his actions, including seven years working for British whose identities he passed to the Soviets during World War II, contributed to harsh criticism of the document on Thursday from British historians and commentators.

After British intelligence agencies unmasked Blunt in the mid-1960s, he was granted immunity from prosecution—and, for 15 years, an understanding that his treachery not be publicly exposed—in return for cooperating with British intelligence. He has his career in 1979 when he was publicly exposed as a spy by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

The memoir discloses that Blunt contemplated suicide when he learned in 1950 that his ruse might have been exposed.

But even in his discussion of suicide, Blunt appears to have thought first of himself, and of his friends and family, and not of the people he had betrayed. "Many people will say that it would have been the honorable thing to do," he wrote. But he said he had decided that suicide was "a cowardly solution," because it would leave those close to him to deal with his exposure as a spy, and with their sense of loss at his death.

Also, he said, he wished to finish his work on a number of art history projects. *AFP*

US mayors, rabbis arrested for corruption

NEW YORK—US LAW ENFORCEment agents on Thursday arrested dozens of politicians and rabbis in an eight-corruption sweep alleging money laundering, extortion, bribery and even trafficking of human organs.

The stunning New Jersey swoop netted 44 people across a state long seen as one of the most corrupt and crime-ridden in the country.

The rabbis were among the suspects, along with the mayors of the cities of Hoboken, Secaucus and Ridgefield, the Jersey City deputy mayor and council president, two state assembly members, and numerous other politicians, prosecutors said.

Acting US Attorney Ralph Marra told a press conference the arrests demonstrated "the pervasive nature of public corruption in this state."

The money laundering ring allegedly involved from New Jersey and New York to Israel and Switzerland, while US politicians easily exploited loopholes in state laws to disguise bribes as contributions to himself-to-knight campaigns.

"The politicians willingly put themselves up for sale," said Marra, while "clergymen cloak their extensive criminal activity behind a façade of servitude."

Although New Jersey is more famous for a history of Indian Mafia families, it was Jewish clergy who allegedly played a central role in this crime network.

The Department of Justice said in a statement that the international network "laundered at least total of millions of dollars through charitable, nonprofit entities controlled by rabbis in New York and New Jersey." *AFP*

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queen

Zelaya heads for border showdown

ESTELI, NICARAGUA—HONDURAS'S DE FACTO government shut its southern border with Nicaragua on Thursday, hoping to block President Manuel Zelaya's bid to return home a month after he was ousted in a coup.

Zelaya on Thursday completed the first stage of a dramatic bid to end his military-imposed exile, traveling to the border town of Estelí, northern Nicaragua, and vowing to cross the nearby frontier on Friday or Saturday.

Defying government threats to arrest him and instigate warnings that the move would likely prompt bloodshed, Zelaya boarded a 50-vehicle convoy in the Nicaraguan capital Managua, accompanied by a phalanx of ousted supporters.

In Honduras, the military-backed government responded with restrictions on incoming border crossings, as hundreds of Zelaya supporters headed for the coffee-growing Jinotest region, which straddles the pan-American highway.

"I'm walking toward the Honduran border. I hope that a good portion of the Honduran people can get through the barriers," Zelaya said on arrival in Estelí.

Honduras troops expelled Zelaya from Honduras at gunpoint on June 28 in a move supported by the courts and Congress.

But the deposed president said he hoped Honduran soldiers awaiting him would "lower their guns" when they saw their elected leader and join his ranks to "raise the banner of democracy."

"We go with the white flag of peace to proclaim reconciliation for the Honduran people," he said.

"I know I am in danger, at risk, but I am ready to make the sacrifice, because Honduras needs peaceful change."

Zelaya announced he would return home after talks with the interim government, lambasting De Gana Elías President Oscar Arias, collapsed.

In a first attempt, on July 5, he tried to fly into the Toncontín airport, but was blocked by military units deployed on the runway, while on the ground, two of his supporters died in clashes with troops.

Regional powers, including the United States, have backed Zelaya's quest to regain office, but urged him not to return for fear of prompting bloodshed in a country some say is teetering on the brink of civil war.

In an increasingly polarized Honduras, Zelaya supporters called a national strike on Thursday, with teachers unions suspending classes across the country.

In the Honduran town of El Paraíso, 10 kilometers from Nicaragua, supporters of "Mel" as he is known, congregated in defiance of a 12-hour curfew in the

HONDURAN soldiers and policemen stop supporters of ousted President Manuel Zelaya at the town of Paraíso, near the border crossing between Honduras and Nicaragua, 118 km north of Tegucigalpa on July 23. Ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya has moved to end his month-long exile by staging a dramatic border crossing from Nicaragua, defying government threats to arrest him and warnings the move will prompt bloodshed. —AFP

BAYVIEW PARK HOTEL HOSTS PHAA–PHILAHR 1st CONSULTATIVE FORUM

Bayview Park Hotel Manila, General Manager Atty. Eugene T. Tay hosted the Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport Authority (PIAA) and Philippine Association of Hotel Representatives (PHILAHR) 1st Consultative Forum which was held recently in its Manila Bay Ballroom at Bayview Park Hotel. Shown in photo are (from left): PHILAHR President Mr. Antonio Aviz, PIAA General Manager Gen. Alfonso O. Cruz, Bayview Park Hotel General Manager Atty. Eugene T. Tay and PHILAHR Vice President Mr. Ben Adviz.

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SPORTS
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SAN BEDA center Sudan Daniel (second from left) is held back by a referee as he tries to confront Letran's Kevin Alas after the final buzzer. Letran fans of both teams engaged in skirmishes. /A18 and Sports Desk

Melee mars Lions' victory over Knights

By Cedelf P. Tupas

DEFENDING CHAMPION SAN BEDA showed it can handle the heat from Letran in a 79-74 victory yesterday that degenerated into a melee in the 85th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the FILOI Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Rookie Sudan Daniel and skipper Jeantam Gamalinda made key baskets to power the Red Lions to their fourth straight victory that solidified their hold of second place with a 5-1 card.

In the second game, St. Benilde drew an inspired performance from Ola Adeyemo to run back Perpetual Help, 84-60.

The Blazers, who chase 11 points from Adeyemo, improved their record to 3-3 to join the Knights in a share of fourth spot.

The 5-foot-9 Daniel fired up the Lions with two slam dunks that sparked a 14-5 turnaround bridging the third and fourth quarters, allowing San Beda to seize control heading into the final two minutes.

With the Lions protecting a 74-71 cushion, Gamalinda sifted in a triple with 34.2 seconds left, Ho' dazed out the lead to 74-77 with two free throws, nine ticks to 42 seconds, before Borgie Hermida hit two foul shots that sealed the win with 8.1 seconds remaining.

"We got super disdisrupted tonight," said Lim, after drew a personal NCAA-best 15 points from Daniel. "Letran is always tough every time they play us. We just have to deal with the kind of pressure they give us."

Mayhem reigned after the buzzer sounded.

After pulling down his seventh and last rebound, Daniel exchanged nasty stares with Kevin Alas. The Letran player alleged that Daniel kicked him during the play prompting him to retaliate using his forearms.

Alas' older brother, Kristoffer, rushed to confront Daniel, and players from both benches rushed to the scrimmage.

In the height of the melee, coins, soda cans, plastic water bottles and even plastic chairs were seen flying to the court. Fights broke out between groups of Letran and San Beda supporters at the upper box and at courtside.

Letran coach Louie Alas was seen pacifying

Tams eye 3rd win vs B'dogs

Warriors face dangerous Tigers

By Jeanvion N. Paya

RELYS Mejor Vinluan dribbles away from Adamson's Eric Carmon during their game Thursday won by the Tamaraws, 63-61.

THE EASTERN UNIVERSITY COACH OLIVER Capacio believes his Tamaraws have yet to live up to their preseason billing.

Hoping to regain the form that made them the tournament favorites, the Tamaraws shoot for a third straight triumph when they battle the National U Bulldogs in the UAAP men's basketball tournament at 2 p.m. today at the Philsports arena.

"I've been telling the team that we have to show it on the floor," said Capacio after the Tamaraws' sloppy 63-61 escape against Adamson last Thursday. "It's more on execution. We played hard, been working what we've a reminders, but I told them no one wins a championship on paper. All the champion teams show it on the floor."

University of the East and University of Santo Tomas, two teams also aiming to do better than their previous outings, are to keep a share of the second spot in their 4-p.m. duel.

"We need to relax our game to improve more on our communication especially inside the court," said UE coach Lawrence Chongson of the Warriors, who share a 2-1 slate with the Tamaraws and the Tigers.

Guards Mark Barroso and Jiff Corvis battled cast the Tamaraws with clutch baskets in the final four minutes after trailing most of the game against the Falcons.

The Tamaraws pulled off their second straight victory despite missing 17 of 27 free throws and fumbling away 18 of their game efforts.

"I kept reminding them that all the teams want to beat us," said Capacio. "But it's good that this is happening in the early part of the UAAP. We can still adjust."

Capacio said his team should be weary of the Bulldogs' frontcourt led by rookie Jewel Pontlevedra.

"Their big men are quicker than us," he said. "We have to adjust to their running game and their pressure defense."

Chongson said the Warriors, buoyed by Real Lee, Elmer Espiritu and Paul Lingas, are looking beyond maintaining UE' main man Jaybee Ajedano, who's averaging 25 points.

The Tigers remain confident of their chances despite coming off their first loss in three games against defending champion Ateneo, 83-77, last Sunday.

"At the start, many were saying we can't even reach the Final Four," said UST coach Pido Jarencio. "But now we think we can be the dark horse this season."

RP cyclists' aim: Top 3 finish in 2 int'l races

By Jun Navarro

AS A FORMER NATIONAL ROAD AND TOUR champion, Benjie Dobson's sound judgment is telling him that victory in a three-stage team national race could very well be determined on the second day.

Dobson will handle a six-man team tapped to don the national colors in the Stella Open in Malaysia and Indonesia's Tour de East Java where the top riders in Asia are expected to show up.

Tour veterans Lloyd Reynaldo will be the skipper of the team backrolled by the Lipa-Batangas Association, Amateur Vinyl (LPGMA) and Lagalpa, the same group-of-cycling enthusiasts that entered the Tour of Luzon during the summer.

Dobson said they train almost on a daily basis, making them fit for the tough grind ahead.

"We're aiming for a top three finish in the team event," said Dobson, Tour of Luzon champion in 1992 and 1995. "Except for the July 28 to 30 Stella Open and the preparation for the Tour de East Java on Aug. 9 to 19.

The Stella Open is a 180-kilometer timed stage race traditionally held in Alor Setar, a high-altitude area near the border of Thailand.

It has been classified as a 2.2-level race by the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) along with the Tour de East Java, another three-stage course where European riders normally participate.

"The overall winner of the race usually comes out on top after two stages as the first two days will be crucial," said Dobson, the only Filipino to win race action in the Tour of Bohol/Cebu in 1996.

LPGMA president Arnel Ty said the participation of the team was endorsed by Philcycling president and Ilocanyo mayor Abraham Tolentino, whose group has the solid backing of the DCI, the world governing body to the sport.

"The team is lucky the national team accord by organizers and tickets to several high-caliber races in Southeast Asia," said Ty.

The two races are part of LPGMA and Lagalpa's long-term program to send the Ilaw Filipinos to the Tour de France.

BUNCIO: Still Superbikes record-holder

Buncio sweeps Aguilar anew

DEFENDING CHAMPION MARCO Buncio pulled off another sweep in the opening of technical Glenn Aguilar and reset his own record in the third leg of the 2009 BRC Superbikes Series held recently in the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Aside from his Superbikes feat, the 26-year-old Buncio also captured the 150cc Open crown and was runner-up the 150cc division of the Philippine Underbone King Championships.

Buncio established a new track record of 1:37.828, shattering his previous mark of 1:38.567.

With the win, Buncio fortified his lead for a three-point Superbikes crown as he now scores a total of 147 points or a 12-point advantage over Aguilar.

"I'm grateful that the Lord has given me so much blessings in my racing career these days," said Buncio.

Buncio controlled the tempo from start to finish, breaking away from Aguilar during the first few laps before slowing down to conserve his tires. He completed the 12-lap race in 16 minutes and 22.978 seconds, 1.734 ahead of Aguilar.

Aguilar grabbed the lead on the first corner of race 6 but his attempt backfired as he nearly flipped in a spin-out, allowing Buncio to move ahead for good.

He wrapped up the eliminations race in 16:27.951 or a far 2.873 seconds lead over Aguilar.

The indefatigable Buncio displayed the same intensity in winning the 150cc Open class title over Anthony Ramos and Danny Bagajay. He posted the fastest lap time of 2:11.251 before claiming the checkered flag in 12 minutes and 1.886 seconds.

He also gave Filipino-Japanese Melanio Fernando a tough fight in the 150cc Open before winding up runner-up just 0.938 of a second behind.

Tiu nears 6th nat'l drag racing crown

ALL JONATHAN TIU MIGHT is to finish at least in second place to secure an unprecedented sixth straight crown in the 80th and penultimate leg of the 2009 San Mig Coffee-National Drag Racing Championship-National Finals race today at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Tiu, who owns the SRC trophy record time of 9.903 seconds, paces the title race with 43 points.

If he fails below second place, Tiu may be in for a showdown with Pepe Santos and Ed Christian Go for the Quick 8 title and overall championship.

Go, meanwhile, is seeking a third win to fortify his chances for the Pit class crown. He has 30 points so far, or a 10-point advantage over his fellow San Miguel Marlins, Isabela Mayor Edge Go and Pilly Why Empeadon.

Also seeking victories are Jonathan Wang in the Elite class, Jeanette Go in the Diesel Bridge and Vic Mallari in the Sportsman event.

SPORTSWATCH

Elorde brothers fight tonight

ELORDE BROTHERS GIL AND ORLY GRANDSONS OF THE LATE boxing great Gabriel and sons of former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Johnny will make their ring debuts at the Elorde Sports Center in Social Road, Parañaque City at 6 p.m.

But still in their Makati days as six-round bout is a battle to prove his undefeated record of seven wins. Younger brother Mig, also undefeated in four wins, and Bantamweight Jesse square off in four rounds.

Another supporting fight is the battle between Jonathan Tauyong and Roy Jones Pinatikal in a 10-round bout. In the main event, Mexico Lauzardo of Florida Caribe battles Edgar Salitgar, also in 10 rounds.

FIRST CAISA CUMBRE PRO-AM Some of the participants in the 1st Casa Cumbre tournament gather after the conclusion of the two-day event in Calatagan recently. PBA Barrio topped the pro-division while Jose Henri Lhuillier reigned in the amateur side. Casey Sotto, Poy Salvandan, Jaime Chrisingco Jr., Ven Rustan, Jessie Lopez and Rommel Espinosa also participated.

Thank God, SBP still our official basketball church

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THERE HAS BEEN NO WORD ON THE whereabouts of Filipino basketball officials who did not make it to a decisive meeting in Geneva this week.

So-sated if the group, say, took the roving train.

Those people are supposed to be assessed per seniors. So, there's no sense reason for them to be stranded anywhere around the globe.

The official word from the headquarters of the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) is that the group, headed by boxing sensational candidate Prospero Pichay was a no-show. Period.

* * *

If they had indeed taken off—they had confirmed hotel reservations in Geneva—they should have at least made contact.

So word as of presstime yesterday and people were left to wonder and speculate.

The lead alibi was that they failed to obtain Swiss visas.

To this came the retort: Why did officers of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, who showed up in Geneva to refute dirty allegations from the BAE manage to get their visas—duah?

* * *

Will these SBP figures have any direction/action, the way they claimed the SBP violated the so-called Bangkok Agreement?

There has been some concern because the elected Ceneza showdown could have helped solve problems afflicting Philippine basketball.

A modernization between the SBP and the BAP would've been critical and many, by something would've nonetheless come out of the dog-out.

* * *

After being ordained by a unison rule, a support body at least, the BAP got the commissioners from the Fiba, which allowed it to participate in certain national basketball development supports.

In the Philippines, where basketball has grown to be treated like religion, Fiba has, in effect, anointed SBP as the official church.

SBP has the role and duty to determine the development of the game in the country.

It goes without saying that when that, as mentioned by the Fiba, it's the role of the SBP to lend a hand in this aspect of BP basketball.

* * *

"We had reportedly invited them and waited for the BAP to participate, but they just refused to come and help," explained Bobby Singzon, SBP vice chair.

The Geneva Convention became a necessity after Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann blindly hit allegations that the SBP had totally left the BAP out in the cold.

Of course, it's open knowledge to Philippine basketball circles that the remaining thrust of the discredited BAP group, desperately reaping what amounts to scrapheap now has been to get back at the SBP.

The BAP is fast, kept barking on the ignominious ninth place finish of the NP team in the 2007 Fiba-Asia tournament.

Then there's now the shameful performance of the Powerade Pilipinas team in the Jones Cup.

* * *

Woe but the BAE with its dark intent, will never look its ammunition when it again draws and shoots the SBP.

In fact, what obviously stranded these BAP officers on their way to Geneva was no excess of bulging baggage.

The discredited former national basketball bishops, headed by a fake president, simply have many personalities.

It was just too bad that the anti-SBP stink bombs exploded in their unholy faces.

Malaysia tennis slots up for grabs

FILIPINO JUNIOR NETTERS WILL COMPETE for slots in the 2009 Milo Junior Tennis Cup-Malaysia, the winners of which will represent the country in the Milo Pesta International Action in December in Kuala Nasi, Malaysia.

Regional eliminations for boys' and girls' 14-under, 12-under and unders 10-under divisions gets underway on July 25 and 26 at the Holland Tennis Club in Davao; the South Luzon leg on Aug. 1 and 2 at San Pedro Alabang Village Leg on August 8 and 9 in Cebu; and North Luzon leg on Sept. 26 and 27 at the Philam Homes Tennis Club in Quezon City.

LAST year's Milo girl's 11-12 champ Erika Lagera

Fiba frees nat'l five from 'hostage' threat

By Jane Manares

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION (PBA) has removed a vicious roadblock that had threatened to take the national team hostage and put the sport in total disarray again.

PBA officials arrived from Geneva Thursday night, heralding a decision from the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) recognizing the PBA's primacy in local caging over the recalcitrant Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP).

In a hastily called press conference at the PLDT head office in Makati yesterday, PBA president Manny V. Pangilinan hailed the Fiba recognition of the local federation's programs.

BAP officials had earlier said the country faced suspension from international competitions if the Fiba ruled that SBP was remiss in undying local basketball under the terms of the so-called Manila Agreement.

If that happened, the Fiberglass Boys Philippine would join the Fiba Asia Championships in Tianjin, China, on Aug. 6 to 15. The tournament is the regional qualifier for the 2010 World Championships in Turkey.

"I thank Fiba for the decision and congratulate our officials for a job well-done," said Pangilinan, referring to the SBP team which attended a series of meetings called by Fiba's central committee in Geneva.

"It's time to really move forward and put this behind us."

SBP chair Gener Mamuyac, vice chair Nicky Vargas, executive director Medi Jala and legal counsel Marlowe Advincula were asked to the Fiba headquarters to defend the SBP position against the BAP's complaints.

Citing their failure to secure Visitor visas, SBP head Prospero Pichay, treasurer Christian Tiu and legal counsel Roni Alexander failed to attend to the three-day sessions.

"I think our all won," said Vargas. "The whole SBP program will again continue after being put in temporary purgatory.

"We will continue to coach out to the BAP. I know they (BAP officials) love basketball, too. I urge them to join us in our efforts and start working for the progress of the sport."

The Fiba cited to recognize the BAP as the country's governing body for the sport.

"I think the Fiba decision is final," said Jala. "There are merely compliance requirements and not conditions for recognition.

PANGILINAN: Moving forward

Blu Boys yield to Danes, miss q'final slot

SASKATOON, CANADA — THE PHILIPPINES lost a heartbreaking 2-1 decision to Denmark on Thursday and failed at the last hurdle to reach the quarterfinal round of the XII World Men's Softball Championship here.

The Blu Boys ended their final 4 elimination round campaign with 4-3-0 win-loss slate, the same tally of Britain and Denmark, but the former made it into the final eight on the strength of their lower run—against record.

The three-way tie ensued after the Britons, already aware that they had a superior tiebreak record over the dejected Blu Boys, yielded a 5-1 decision to Botswana.

The Blu Boys, whose participation here was nearly derailed by Cabinet Undersec. Ben Hubalo, Jr. behest de Boracay, Pilipino and the Philippine Sports Commission, beat the Britons in the tournament's opening day 4-3.

Hiltrun later whitewashed Denmark, 7-0, thus pitching only four runs in the Philippines' five.

The Britons, who ended up a rung ahead of the 16th-placed Blu Boys four years ago in the same tournament, joined Pool A leader and defending champion New Zealand (7-0), the United States (6-1) and Japan (4-1) in the knockout quarterfinal round together with the best four teams in Pool B.

The top four teams will then advance to the semifinal round.

Canada, runner up in 2004 in Christchurch, New Zealand, marched to the Gold group sweep to land fellow Pool B qualifiers Australia (6-1), Venezuela (4-1) and Argentina (4-0).

With their 3-4 slate, an improvement on their 2-5 card four years ago, the Blu Boys are expected to wind up in ninth place or lower.

The Philippines' talented first baseman Jaypee Bocatcon could not translate them to runners.

Jesper Sinclair pitched all seven innings for the Danes, striking out 15 Filipino batters.

Losing pitcher Bojer Rojas, who also played without relief, yielded five hits.

The game was close through five and a half innings with both Rojas and Pandacan pesonal-ing zero scoring runs. But the Danes pounced on a faltering Rojas in the sixth inning, connecting on two hits and scoring both their runs.

BIG FIVE: junior Japeth Aguilar attacks the South Korean defense with a leaky hook in Thursday's game.

Guiao ditches Ranidel, Reyes

RP cagers battle Taiwanese today

GAME TODAY
3 p.m. — Pilipinas Taiwan vs. Powerade Pilipinas

By Mayang R. Candilo

TAIPEI — THE FINAL LINEUP OF THE POWERade Philippines squad meant to bring the country back to the global cage scene was released Friday morning, with the undersized Ranidel de Ocampo and an injured Ryan Reyes stricken off the list of aspirants.

Coach Yeng Guiao made the latter announcement during Friday's morning practice as the team prepared to suit up in "battle" William Jones Cup arena here.

While Guiao was making the announcement, Reyes' teammates, the coach of Reyes' PBA team Rain or Shine, were in a text message to one of the cavaliers inquiring about his point guard's injury and status in the team.

"I would have preferred (to have) Ryan," Guiao said a handful of Filipino sportswriters over breakfast. "But he himself admitted that he wasn't be ready for Tianjin (China, site of the 26th Asia World Championship qualifier set to start Aug. 6).

"He (Reyes) is actually getting better. But we cannot take the risk [of putting him in the final 12] and risk the more serious than he already [is] getting."

Reyes pulled his right hamstring muscles late in the international game, against Malaysia, more than a month ago in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championship in Indonesia.

The Philippines lost a 1.5 second in the encounter, eight-nation Jones Cup, even though only the lone naturalized Jordan was suspended.

Left in the RP team are Jayjay Helterbrand, Willie Miller, Gabe Norwood, Arwind Santos, Jarrel Dillinger, Cyrus Baguio, Japeth Aguilar, Enrico Villanueva, Sonny Thoss, Mick Pennisi, Asi Taulava and James Yap.

Yap, incidentally, left for the Philippines early Friday to be on with his ailing mother-in-law, former Pensacola Governor Agapito Aquino.

The Filipinos clash with Chinese Taipei-B at 3 p.m. Saturday before winding up their tuneup stint here against hosts at 1 p.m. on Sunday.

Then fly back home Monday morning, six days before leaving again for Tianjin, where they will shoot for one of three Asian slots in the World Championship in Turkey next year.

Dalupan and his coaching staff, together with Boosters Gindoro Ang Ochoco, take the coach of the 2002 Hutchison Asia ESPY crew that finished fourth, drew the team's final composition.

NOTES: Rojin Sarmiento, the Utah star whose team is an Olympic berth in Beijing last year, arrived on Thursday and became another big addition to Pilipinas Taiwan. After viewing the various game footage for former players and the Jordanian, the coach of the Israel Elite ISP developmental team said game officials, all former Israeli cagers, have to "shoot it hoisted," who stated the same two for all of the Philippines-Jordanian encounter.

Paragua, 2 other Filipinos among leaders

Standings after Day 4 results

[7 pts]—IM Paragua (RP), IA Lupit (RP), IA Rhine (RP); [3.5]—Vinayak (India), S. Bhakti (India), IA Ho (Vietnam), Y. Lee (Vietnam), T. Le (Vietnam), IA Cheng (Vietnam), N. Hoang Anh (Vietnam), IA Le Quang (Vietnam), T. Hoang Anh (Vietnam), T. Bathuluu (Mongolia), A. Bin (Malaysia), C. Quang (Vietnam), T. Anh (Vietnam), T. Hien (Singapore), R. T. Ong (Vietnam)

HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM — GRANDmasters Mark Paragua and Darwin Laylo and International Master Richard Nunez won their second round ouantities to share the lead with three others, even as top seed Gil Mabiy Sr. bounced back into contention at the Asian Zone 3.3 chess championships here.

Paragua eclipsed Wife Master Shinja Rifkan of Japan to join the lead pack in this nine-round tournament being held to determine two slots representatives to the World Chess Cup scheduled in Russia later this year.

Laylo, who is seeking his second straight World Cup appearance after making it through the Asian Individual Championships in Manila City in 2007, overwhelmed Ya Thant Zin Myint of Vietnam, while Nunez crushed Japanese FM Akira Shimazaki.

Also with the same perfect score are second seed GM Jhong Deong, So-A-seed Gil Susanto Megaranto of Indonesia and ranked Hue Hoa of Vietnam.

So, the highest-rated players here with an Elo of 2646, overpowered Vietnamese IM Ton Thai Nhu Tung, a day after being held to a draw by FM Le Hong Nguyen.

Asia's first Girl Eugene Torre, however, failed to follow up his opening-day win and agreed to a draw with Wife FM Phi Hoang.

Another Filipino campaigner, IM Rolando Mole, settled for his second straight draw, this time against GM Nguyen Anh Hai of Vietnam.

PARAGUA

Padyak Pinoy tour plans to go international

By Jane Manares

ORGANIZERS OF THE PADYAK PINOY promised a tougher kind of competition after making the Davao-Cagayan de Oro leg (UCI 4) conclude the challenge bike race in the Asian Pro Tour calendar next year.

Gary Capitan, chair of the Padyak Pinoy organizing committee, said a request for enrollment to elevate the annual race to the status of an international event was sent last month to the UCI following a successful staging in May.

"Results emerging from the (2009) Padyak Pinoy's international challenge seem to indicate that our riders are now ready to meet their foreign counterparts," said Capitan. "With their showing, we have gained enough confidence to host a UCI backed cycling event."

Endorsed by PhilCycling president Abraham Tolentino, the application of Padyak organizer Dynamic Outsource Solutions Inc. was received by the UCI through Sophie Brown of the world body's road racing department.

The four-day international race is tentatively set to start on Sept. 8, 2010. It will kick off with the 155 km Tagaytay-Tagaytay (Stage 1 followed by the 123 km The Peak to Clark Field (Stage 2, the 130.1 km Clark-Subic-Clark (aka SCTEx) Stage 3 and the 100.6 km Subic-Subic (Stage 4.

"It's about time to place the Philippines in the world cycling map again, considering the growing number of cycling enthusiasts and lately, the active role of private companies in promoting the sport," said Capitan.

The Philippines was on the UCI calendar from 1998 to 1998 when the cycling association was still called the Marlboro Tour.

CAPTION

ADVANCE: Lisa del Rosario shows the bronze medal she won in the women's singles of the 2009 World Games in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. She connected with the rest of the RP team Thursday.

Near riot mars Lions'...

From page A-9

the second inning after his wife Lizza and two-year-old son Kiefer were caught in the debris throwing at the back of the Knights bench. Also unconfirmed is grab on his left hand.

In Juniors' play Lemery smashed to its fifth straight win after downing San Pedro, 10-0 in 5 innings. Help time is 2-9 following a 10-2 triumph over St. Bridget.

[illegible]

La Salle, UP spikers trip foes

LINGAYEN, DAGUPAN — SPIKERS FROM De La Salle University-Dasmariñas and the University of the Philippines asserted themselves with breaks-up plays yesterday en route the early lead at the start of the 2009 Pentaclades Beach Volleyball Tournament 3rd leg at the Pantal Marcelo Beach beachhead here.

Lucky April Almadro and her DLSU-Dasmariñas teammates Jennifer Mamenta got off to a great start and held off Arceo-Almadro duo Onpoint and Jessica Morado, 21-15.

Meanwhile, Regina Tingal and Nimah Tio prevailed over DLSU-Dasmariñas schoolmates Hideni Hyam and Alba Lopez, 21-11, for their first win.

Amanda Isada and Lorraine Dua, both freshmen at UP topped Philippine School of Business Administration lost Dyreen Hart Bencio and Jamaica Lauron, 21-13.

The Ulsan di Alexiades, who made it to the finals of the Battle of Champions last November with a different partner in Precious Grace Alonzo, was simply too overpowering as she spearheaded the attack of La Salle-Dasmariñas, scoring service aces and smashes that gave her and Mamenta a 5-0 start.

Nat'l indoor archery tilt fires off in Baguio

TOP ARCHERS, INCLUDING SEA Games members, are seeking action in the National Indoor Target Archery competition this weekend at the University of Cordillera Sports Complex in Baguio City as part of their training for international tournaments.

Among the competitors are Sandino Marcelino, led by Elijah Bhernadi, 12, who is priming up for the World Championship in Ulsan, South Korea, in September.

Also eyeing are Sandino adopters Rondino Bernardo and Gianne Cadungganan, plus Kit Constantino, Jeremiah Montemayor and Trina Bhernadi who are preparing for the Archery World Cup in Shanghai next month.

Rounds to be dispatched in the Baguio competition are recurve previous for boys and girls (70 meters), recurve bowman for boys and girls (50 meters), recurve ladies for juniors, seniors, boys and girls (50 meters), compound senior for men and women (50 meters), recurve masters (50 meters), and recurve competition for disabled athletes (50 meters).

Elijah Bhernadi will compete in both the juniors and seniors bracket slated.

UE Knights golfest Monday

THE UE KNIGHTS INC. GOLF CLUB'S 19th annual Golf Tournament flees off on Tuesday at the Wack Wack east course in Mandaluyong City.

Registration starts at 8 a.m.

Proceeds raise funds for the UERA's social projects. The tournament is sponsored by Shoemart through its president and CEO Hans T. Sy[illegible].

The tournament is the UE Alumni Association's [illegible] of 725-8552, 725-5471 loc. 293 or 0.545.8.734.9687, 373-9748 or 0961-5402143.

SPORTS

Buehrle pitches perfect game

Obama, White Sox fan No. 1, congratulates Chicago hurler

CHICAGO—MARK BUEHRLE PITCHED the first perfect game in the major leagues in five years in leading the Chicago White Sox over the Tampa Bay Rays, 5-0, on Thursday.

Buehrle (11-5) got a great catch from center fielder DeWayne Wise leaping off the ninth inning to save the bid—and the shutout. When Tampa's Gabe Kapler led off with a drive to deep left-center, Wise sprinted, jumped and got his glove above the fence to rob Kapler of a home run.

The ball thrower came on when Wise bounced off the fence, stumbled, fell to the ground and rolled. But he stood, proudly displaying the ball for the crowd as his team left the field.

Michel Hernandez then struck out, and with the 28,830 fans cheering Buehrle's name, Jason Bartlett grounded to shortstop, and Buehrle was mobbed by teammates.

"I don't know if it's really sunk in yet. We have a short flight to Detroit. It's nice. It will be a little hectic later," said Buehrle.

The pitcher had already received a congratulatory telephone call from President Barack Obama—a White Sox fan—following the 18th perfect game in MLB history since the modern era began in 1900 and the first since Arizona's Randy Johnson on May 18, 2004.

"How difficult is it to pitch a perfect game? Since 1900, the start of the modern era of baseball, there have been only 18 perfect games, including the latest by Chicago White Sox's Mark Buehrle. In 106 seasons, 50 MLB teams playing 162 games per year (1,200 games per season) have combined for at least 191,250 (excluding playoff games) matches from the

That means the chances of pitching a perfect game are about 1 in 10,625. The longest wait in between two perfect games was 34 years, between Chicago White Sox' Charlie Robertson's feat on Apr. 30, 1922 in New York Yankees' Don Larsen's achievement on Oct. 8, 1956.

Cy Young of the Boston Americans was the first player to receive history's credit for a perfect game, which he accomplished on May 5, 1904. The MLB's career in the league's top pitchers is claimed after Young.

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Obama told Buehrle: "It was an unbelievable achievement, something that everyone will always remember."

AP

CHICAGO White Sox's Mark Buehrle joins a very elite group in Major League baseball after pitching perfectly against the Tampa Bay Rays. –

IN THE KNOW

Record of perfection

ACCORDING TO MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL (mlb.com), only one hit is official, no-hitter, regulation play). "An official perfect game occurs when a pitcher retires each batter as the opposing team during the entire course of a game, which consists of at least nine innings." A perfect game is different from a no-hitter in that the pitcher allows no batter to reach any base during the course of the game.

In a no-hitter, a pitcher (or pitchers) allows no hits but "a batter may reach base via a walk, an error, a hit by pitch, a passed ball or wild pitch on strike three, or catcher's interference."

ARMSTRONG ON PODIUM?

Contador tops time trial

AIX-LES-BAINS, FRANCE—LANCE ARMSTRONG finds himself in unfamiliar territory at this Tour de France—fighting just to remain among the top three riders.

Armstrong said in dominating his way to victory the seven-time winner had to settle for a 16th-place finish in Thursday's time trial and a tenuous grip on third place.

The 37-year-old American battled fatigue in the 14th stage, a 40.5-kilometer (25-mile) race against the clock around Lac du Bourget (Lake Annecy that Alberto Contador won in 48 minutes, 33 seconds to close in on the overall victory.

Armstrong was 1:30 behind, but he entered the day in fourth and easily overcame a 30-second deficit to Frank Schleck. The Saxo Bank rider finished 2:34 behind Contador to dip from third to sixth overall, but is only 34 seconds behind Armstrong.

After Thursday's stage, Armstrong said he had "varied emotions. Yesterday, to a time trial is not a good result, but my ambition is to get on the podium, so I have to be happy with that."

During his reign as Tour champion, Armstrong never finished lower than third in a time trial, except once, when he placed seventh in one in 2003. The next, in the Stage 1 time trial in Monaco, he won 10th.

Armstrong is admittedly not at his best this year, and is already bidding our hope for a better performance in 2010. He announced on Thursday that he is forming a new team that will be sponsored by Team-based electronics retailer Radio Shack. His current team, Astana, has had financial woes, and he's had worrying with its leader Kazakhstan.

Armstrong's adequate ride on Thursday kept his hopes alive for a podium spot, though he still have to hold off Schleck, a top climber who is sure to challenge the American on Saturday during the uphill finish of the Tour's route to last stage.

Schleck said he pressed brother Andy hard himself determining from several place to finish a day earlier in the last pounding Alpine stage, proving they'll be a force to reckon with in Stage 20.

"I suffered," Armstrong said of the time trial.

Andy Schleck retained second place by finishing 21st... 1:05 behind Contador and only 23 seconds slower that Armstrong, who waits by 1:04 in the race for second overall.

Contador, the 2007 Tour champion, is looking more like the Armstrong of yesteryear as he proved he can convincingly dominate as well as both time trials and in the mountains.

AP

ALBERTO Contador, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, crosses the finish line to win the individual time trial. –

King Roger gets twin princesses

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND—ROGER FEDERer is the father of twin girls after his wife Mirka gave birth on Thursday.

In a statement released on his personal website and Facebook page, tennis' world No. 1 said the girls had been named Charlene Riva and Myla Rose.

"I have some exciting news to share with you," Federer's Facebook page said.

"Late last night, in Switzerland, Mirka and I became proud parents of twin girls.

"We named them Myla Rose and Charlene Riva and they are both healthy and along with their mother they are doing great.

"This is the best day of our lives."

It was the first children for the couple, who were married in April.

Earlier this month, Mirka sat stumble through the nerve-wracking Wimbledon final in which Federer beat American Andy Roddick, 5-7, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (2), 3-6, 16-14, in which his 15th grand slam title, breaking the previous record held by Pete Sampras.

AP

Puyat falls short of q'final bid

MARCEL PUYAT BOWED OUT ANOTHER fancied player in Taylor Gooch on the 20th hole to lose to Japan's No. 1 junior player Hiroaki Imahira in the last 16 to settle for joint ninth in the 62nd US Junior Amateur at the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey Thursday.

Imahira's four passive went to work, sinking long putts to enter control en route to a 2&1 victory. Imahira rolled in a 30-footer on the first hole, knocked in a 10-footer on the next and never missed a putt until the 15th.

Raiden, the ICTSI-backed lot, who shocked fancied Anthony Paolucci in the first round of match play, stopped Gooch on the 19th hole to gain a spot in the Last 16.

Puyat will be attending the Champions Golf Academy in Sarasota, Florida in September where noted swing guru Tim Gavrely is the golf instructor director.

Despite his setback to Imahira, Puyat earned enough Nike ranking points to gain an invitation to play in the Junior Players Championship in September.

Wack Wack, Eastridge share Federation Golf lead

WACK WACK AND EASTRIDGE GOT the same results in their two recent matches to share the lead in Group 1 going to Canlubang, Forest Hills and Highlands forced a three-way tie for the top spot in Group 2 in the Men's Federation Golf League in various courses.

After Wack Wack trashed Orchard 4.5-3.5 and Eastridge downed Royal Northwoods, 3-2, the Mandaluyong golfers banded their Bonanpeace Road counterparts to a 2.5-2.5 draw that left them tied at 6 points on similar 2-1-1 win-loss-draw records.

Eastridge, however, had to give up the Greenmount point when one of its players was found to have used a non-conforming driver.

Canlubang, Forest Hills and Highlands clashed up their second win in head Group 2 at 6 points each.

Canlubang split its series with Sherwood after a 4-1 win, Highlands earned a 3.5-1.5 victory over Sta. Elena while Forest squeezed over Southwoods, 3-2.

In another match, defending champion Riviera was held to a draw by Valley.

This weekend's matches bring Riviera to Wack Wack, Orchard to Eastridge, and Northwoods to Valley in Group 1; Group 2 action sends Forest Hills to Sherwood Hills, Southwoods to Highlands, and Canlubang to Sta. Elena.

Pulling off the Wack Wack sweep of Orchard were the tandems of Josh Villareal-Casey Uy, RJ Marcelo-Antonne Go, Nonie de Jesus-Jack Duarte, Matthew Mendoza-Buddy Wilson and Hubert Lim-John Gobing.

STANDINGS AFTER 6 MATCHES
(Win-Lose-Draw-Points)

Group 1 – Eastridge 2-1-1-6, Wack Wack 2-1-1-6, Valley 2-1-0-4, Riviera 1-1-1-3, Royal Northwoods 1-1-1-3, Orchard 0-3-0-0.

Group 2 – Canlubang 2-0-1-6, Forest Hills 2-1-1-5, Highlands 2-1-1-5, Sta. Elena 1-2-1-3, Manila Southwoods 1-2-1-3, Sherwood Hills 1-2-1-3

Sarangay, 67

SATURDAY'S OBITUARY, THE FATHER OF BRIDEFIA ACCIDENT SPORTS editor Melvin Sarangay, died last July 23, after suffering from a stroke.

He is survived by children Anthony Patrick Sebastian Jr., Bibbit, Maribel, Manuel Rosenia and Michael; in-laws Rosenia, Delby, Christopher and Anthony; and grandchildren Catherine Heather, Cindy, Regine, Rhonnalyn, Jasmine Dawn, Dreyan Jan, Rhonie Diane, Olivia, Christine Marinella, Celine Marian, Chiara Michaela, Chloe Micah, Cameron Myrtle, Mikel Luis Andrei, Jordanna Mikaela, Stephanie Michelle, Shawn Matthew and Sam Matthew. His remains currently lie at Chapel II of Arlington Memorial Chapels in Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Interment will be held on Wednesday, July 29.

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BUSINESS

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■ Enrile bills to cost gov't P21B, says DOF /B4

Gov't plans to put up ICT hubs throughout RP

By Abigail L. Ho

Firms look at cities, not countries, in deciding where to locate

THE COMMISSION ON INformation and Communications Technology (CICT) is bent on building an ICT hub in every province in the country, having seen the importance of ICT in economic development and nation-building.

During the launch of the Next Wave Cities 2009 annual report yesterday, CICT Undersecretary Anthony Rizzo-Chiu said the commission would constantly update its list of cities to be assessed under the Next Wave Cities program, identifying urban centers most suited for business process outsourcing operations.

"We've already evaluated 40 cities, but we're just promoting the top 10 cities," Rizzo-Chiu said. "By November, we'll be releasing a new top 10 list. Our plan is to continuously update the list of cities we assess. We plan to increase the number of cities we evaluate."

According to Business Processing Association of the Philippines chief executive Oscar Santos, it is important to establish Next Wave Cities, as potential BPO firms are now looking at cities, rather than countries, in deciding where to locate.

"Metro Manila is actually the biggest BPO city in the world with 240,000 workers," Santos said. "We need to build more 'Metro Manilas,' and we have to push forward the emerging cities outside Cebu. They have the potential to be the top BPO cities in the world. We just need to develop communication outside Metro Manila."

The current list of Next Wave Cities include Metro Laguna, Metro Cavite, Subic City, Davao City, Bacolod City, Metro Batangas, Holcim Face and Wire, Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City.

According to the Next Wave Cities annual report, Metro Laguna is the best place for (BPO) operations outside Metro Manila and Metro Cebu, with its more than 7,000 graduates each year, proximity to available workforce to Metro Manila, and excellent power and telecommunications infrastructure.

Metro Cavite ranked second overall, DON'T MANG IN

Cash no longer king among BPO workers

THE HIGH WAGES BUBO OFFERED in the business process outsourcing industry may no longer be enough to convince mid-level executives in major us in their jobs, as they now look for more "quality-of-life" incentives.

A survey made by research firm ISAC Global found that, while cash was still an important consideration among BPO talents to their offshoring countries—the Philippines, India and China—the appeal of high wages alone had matured to some, particularly to supervisors, team leaders and mid-managers.

"Results [of the study] show that while the pre-cash rewards to consumers with or slightly below levels reported last year, some categories of awards level desired increased by an astounding 18 percent—notably education at 3000 Global said "quality of life" incentives. Examples of this type of incentive include flex hours, additional paid time off, telecommuting, stress management and family counseling," 3000 said in a statement recently.

"As health and family-related issues are on the rise, most particularly due to work-related stress and working the graveyard shifts, the respondents indicated they were willing to devote more to a company that recognizes and respects their personal needs and life circumstances," it added.

CLICK B4

2009 budget gap may reach ₱300B on poor revenue take

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET deficit this year may hit more than P300 billion if revenue collections do not improve, according to DBS Bank.

This view runs counter to Malacañang's belief that overspending will not exceed the P250-billion ceiling.

In its latest remarks on the Philippines, the Singapore-based bank said the first semester figures served as a stark reminder that the latest deficit ceiling could be an underestimation of a deteriorating fiscal position.

"Clearly, with a cumulative deficit of P151.2 billion for the first half—already more than half the government's [full-year] target—there that the official deficit target may be breached will persist," DBS said.

"Given the weak growth outlook, we think the deficit will amount to P300 billion to P340 billion, or 3.7 percent to 4.3 percent of GDP (gross domestic product, or the total output produced within an economy)."

DBS said that in keeping the deficit from breaching the P250-billion ceiling, it would entail an improvement in revenue collection, a cutback on spending in the second semester, or both.

The bank projected that if revenue in the second half were to average at P91 billion a month, while spending P117 billion a month—an area in the first half—then the deficit would exceed P300 billion.

On Monday, Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves said government spending reached P609.1 billion in the first six months, while revenue amounted to P368.7 billion.

Revenue was 6.5 percent lower than the target of P561.4 billion, while expenditures were 3.3 percent lower than the program of P736.5 billion.

SEE BUDGET GAP B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE ₱48.065 = $1
YEN-DOLLAR RATE ¥95.107 = $1
As of 5 p.m., July 24, 2009 As of 5 p.m., July 24, 2009

STOCK MARKET

Stocks rally on heavy trade

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

JULY

STOCKS ROSE BY 2.5 PERCENT YESTERDAY on heavy trading as investors took heart from Wall Street's eight-month high optimism on equities.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange went up by 64.47 points to close the week at 2,676.41 on gains of the property and telco. Total turnover, whose indices surged by 2.6 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

"Market played up/gaps among," BPI Securities said, noting that buyers got a renewed boost from a stroke rise in US stocks, which were up 2 percent as favorable corporate earnings and home sales.

The financial sector index moved up by 1.5 percent, while the indices for holding firms, services as well as mining and oil were likewise up by 2.0 percent, 1.7 percent and 0.34 percent, respectively.

There were 86 advancers against 27 decliners, while 58 stayed steady.

4 RP corporations get boost from Moody's upgrade

By Michelle V. Rarus

FOUR LOCAL CORPORATIONS HAD their credit ratings with Moody's Investors Service upgraded, benefiting from the increase in the Philippines' own credit score.

Moody's said in a statement yesterday that it upgraded the credit ratings of National Power Corp. (Napocor), Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) and Cagayan Water and Energy Co.—all state-owned firms—from B1 to Ba3.

But it drew parities below investment grade, while Ba1 is four notches below.

The new ratings for the government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) should be the same as that assigned to the Philippine government. Most state-owned companies enjoy the same credit ratings as that of the government because their debts carry a sovereign guarantee.

Corporations cannot have credit ratings higher than that assigned to the sovereign.

Also, the credit rating of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) was upgraded by a notch from Ba2 to Ba1.

Moody's said nearly $2 billion worth of bonds earlier issued by the four companies would be positively affected by the ratings upgrade. The improved ratings are expected to result in the reduction in interest rates for said bonds in the secondary market. An increase in credit rating encourages investors to invest in bonds sold by the concerned entities.

There are $1 billion worth of debt securities recently issued by PSALM, $550 million by PLDT, $400 million by Napocor and $224 million by Cagayan—all will be affected by the ra-

SEE CORPORATIONS B4

UBP to sell ₱5B in debt notes

Petroenergy ventures into renewal energy

By Amy R. Remo

PETROENERGY RESOURCES CORP. SAID its board of directors had approved the company's move to enter into renewable energy projects.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Petroenergy chief information officer Brian P. Pedrosa said the firm had amended its secondary purpose in its Articles of Incorporation, allowing it to venture into the business of generating power from both conventional and renewable sources of energy.

Pedrosa also said Petroenergy had declared a 20-percent cash dividend, or 20 centavos per share, amounting to ₱37.36 million. The amount will be paid on Aug. 31. But, only to all stockholders of record as of Aug. 5.

The principal properties of Petroenergy include various oil areas in the Philippines and in Gabon, Africa. It has interests in local service contracts that are located in northwest Palawan, offshore Mindoro and East Visayan Sea.

Three concessions are in the exploration stage and seven concessions are being farmed out to reduce risk inherent to the business.

Aboitiz bank to start sale within next two weeks

By Doris C. Dumlao

VALDEPEÑAS

THE ABOITIZ-LED UNION Bank of the Philippines will launch the sale of up to ₱5 billion in debt notes, qualifying as tier 2 or supplementary capital, within the next two weeks.

In an interview, UBP president Victor Valdepeñas said the bank recently obtained the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' approval for the offering of the tier 2 notes. It intends to hold onto a local marketmaker to sell the notes.

The proposed offering would consist of lower tier 2 notes with a tenor of 10 years but with an option for the bank to redeem them on the fifth year or pay a higher interest rate.

The bank has mandated ING and UBSAB to handle the offering.

London-based credit watchdog Fitch Ratings has assigned UBP a national long-term rating of 'A+' with a stable outlook. As of end March this year, the bank's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) stood at 9.3 percent, lower than 11.6 percent at end-2008 and 13.1 percent at end-2007. Fitch ratings said the decline in CAR, a measure of capital against risk assets, was due to the acquisition of International Exchange Bank in 2008 and strong loan growth in 2008.

The current bank allows banks to cover risk assets with long-term subordinated debt instruments or tier 2 notes for purposes of compliance to the minimum CAR requirement of 10 percent.

Window dressing

BREAKTIME

Conrado E. Bawagan III

WONDER OUT THERE THE SUPREME Court is about to issue—any time soon—a decision on the tax-exempt status of state-owned gaming firm Pagcor.

Ahead four years ago, as every body knows, except perhaps the farming lords, the Department of Finance declared that Pagcor owed the BIR almost ₱8 billion in taxes.

Pagcor insisted that its charter gave it tax exemption. Those of course excluded the franchise tax of 5 percent.

For its part, the DOF claimed that the e-VAT law removed those exemptions.

The case grew tenuous as the years by needed a release, and so they agreed last year to go to the Supreme Court.

From what I heard, one of the Supreme Court justices already penned a decision, and it is making its rounds to the other justices. I cannot reveal this suspense, really!

* * *

ANYWAY, the issue erupted only during the time of Finance Secretary Margarita Teves, who assumed the position after this earn solicitation-trainee suffered from a mini resignation in the Cabinet.

And so Teves has been nagging the BIR to meet its monthly, quarterly and yearly collection targets.

Unfortunately, the BIR has been falling. Mind had it that, during the last two years, Teves even ordered other government agencies to remit taxes in advance.

Supposedly, that should help the BIR—and thus the DOF—in meeting their yearly revenue targets.

Among them were Development Bank of the Philippines and Landbank, although other private corporations, such as Pilipinas Shell, also caved in to the Teves orbiter.

It was nothing but a window dressing. And, as such it could only create other problems. In the following year, for instance, the shortfall in collection became more pronounced. The big corporations already released their tax payments, right?

The BIR had nothing more to collect from them—the following year.

And so the DOF resorted once more to other sources of taxes, and Pagcor—being the biggest money-making government-owned corporation—should only be expected to become the DOF's target.

* * *

UNDER its then Fighters Corporation, Pagcor consistently increased its revenue, starting at ₱14 billion in 2002 to more than ₱30 billion last year.

From what I gathered, Pagcor could only see about 2 to 3 percent of its revenues for operating expenses and new investments, and for all its money-handling process.

Also, several laws mandated Pagcor to set aside huge amounts of its revenue for specific uses.

A big chunk of its revenue goes straight to the national treasury. It is not recorded as tax collection. In short, not good for Teves' public image!

The ₱30.7 billion in yearly revenues of Pagcor would, factor for the e-VAT alone, the DOF's tax intake should increase by more than ₱3 billion a year —no more! The DOF does not even have to work hard to snap corruption in the BIR. Or in the Bureau of Customs, for that matter! Yes, know, stopping things like smuggling!

* * *

SAID TEI BE vigorously preparing for the elections next year is businessman Jose "Pepito" Alvarez, who is reportedly looking at the governorship of Palawan.

The man is often mentioned with the automotive business, having been part of Columbian Motors Group (Kia and Mazda Brand of cars) and the takeover of the Philippines bus company in the 1990s.

But in Palawan, Alvarez has been known as the owner of the biggest logging firm, Pagdanan Timber Products, which stopped operations in the 1990s due to pressure from local environment groups.

Pagdanan Timber operated in the town of San Vicente, where the mayor today is the uncle of Alvarez.

In that same town as protest, Dilimnan Gov. Joel Reyes is waging a campaign to stop the construction of hills along the roadways, for use as landfill in a road center project of a company owned by Michael Gonzalez, a tycoon-born naturalized Filipino who set up a Hollywood-type studio called Bigkoes in Cebu.

In San Vicente, the Gleisener group is developing a huge Hollywood film studio. Said to be supporting the group is the town mayor.

Alvarez said his group also own huge chunks of raw land in San Vicente. Real estate speculation is heating up in the town, aided by the international airport project there, being promoted mainly by Alvarez' brother, Rep. Antonio Alvarez.

But the Alvarez group is aware that his being governor of the province will not hinder the real estate speculation at all.

* * *

IN ALL the popularity surveys of possible presidentiables conducted in 2010, the name of PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan (known as "MVP" in his herbalife circles) does not appear.

Talk in basketball town in the past was that MVP had an eye to wend the presidency, which should explain his deep involvement in the country's most popular sport.

It is now clear that MVP has no political plans.

That may be welcome news to MVP's group called First Pacific, which is based in Hong Kong.

Well, everybody seems to have forgotten already that MVP's business interests have all been foreign ownerships, tracing them expired all the way from Indonesia.

That is probably all thanks to the public image that MVP has established for himself through his coverage of the sports.

Gov't gets ₱1B from PNOC-EC

PNOC-EXPLORATION CORP. HAS DECLARED ₱1.002 billion in cash dividends, of which ₱1 billion was turned over to the national government on Wednesday.

The remaining ₱2.1 million was paid to the public stockholders, said PNOC-EC, the upstream petroleum and coal arm of the state-owned Philippine National Oil Co.

The company initially declared ₱200 million in dividends on June 9 at ₱0.099 per share. An additional ₱802 million was declared on July 23 at ₱0.400 per share, which will be paid on or before Aug. 26.

PNOC-EC, whose shares of stock are 99.7% percent owned by the government, said the high dividends resulted from its net income of ₱3.05 billion last year, the highest income it had posted since its inception in 1976.

"The company's ₱3.05 billion income in 2008 can be attributed to the increase in revenues from the Malampaya project and coal operations, brought about by higher gas and coal prices in the world market," PNOC-EC explained. Amy R. Remo

Gov't plans to put up . . .

From page B1

and was touted as the emerging urban center outside Metro Manila. Iloilo City boasted up the top 5, being the most cost-efficient city in the top 100.

DOT Undersecretary Mercedes Tomblon said the agency had completed recently the assessments of more cities, including Tagaytay City in Cagayan Valley and Sulangan in Batanes.

"When before we had some trouble introducing the concept of 'Next Wave Cities' to local governments, now local government units are lining up to have their areas assessed. They want to be part of the list," Tomblon said.

Stocks rally . . .

From page B1

The most heavily traded stock was Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., whose share price went up by 1.5 percent to close at ₱2,290 a share.

Single-handedly accounted for 22 percent of the ₱5.4 billion value turnover at the stock market.

The Lopezes' Energy Development Corp. gained 3.6 percent to finish at ₱4.35, while conglomerate Ayala Corp. rose 0.48 percent to close at ₱292.50 a share.

Also, the country's largest power retailer, Manila Electric Co., continued its rise, posting a record close of ₱295 a share, up by 7 percent.

Property tycoon Andrew Tan's Megaworld Corp. was the fifth most actively traded stock, rising by 3.5 percent to close at ₱1.16 per share yesterday.

Other stocks which heavily benefited from yesterday's run-up were Ayala Land Inc., First Philippine Holdings Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., Globe Telecom Inc. and SM Prime Holdings. Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

As of July 24, 2009

Currencies

July 24, 2009 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1	1	47.500
Japan	100 Yen	0.5106	0.0108	51.06
United Kingdom	Pound	1.6102	1.61	161.02
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1226	0.1226	6.1462
Switzerland	Franc	0.4373	0.4373	43.7373
Canada	Dollar	0.8911	0.8911	89.1911
Singapore	Dollar	0.6920	0.6920	69.202
Australia	Dollar	0.8113	0.8113	81.1276
Bahrain	Dinar	1.8756	1.8756	187.5756
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2666	0.2666	26.6666
Brunei	Dollar	0.6920	0.6920	69.2020
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0049	0.0049	0.4949
Kuwait	Dinar	2.0744	2.0744	207.4407
UAE	Dirham	0.2590	0.2590	25.9090
EU	Euro	1.4145	1.4145	141.4145
Korea	Won	0.0405	0.0405	4.0496
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.1420	0.1420	14.2020
Denmark	Krone	0.2547	0.2547	25.4747
India	Rupee	0.0101	0.0101	1.0101
Norway	Krone	0.2508	0.2508	25.0808
Sweden	Krona	0.1384	0.1384	13.8484
New Zealand	Dollar	0.6617	0.6617	66.1717
Thailand	Baht	0.0139	0.0139	1.3939
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.0147	0.0147	1.469

Source: Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. as of July 24, 2009
Reference rates as quoted by Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp.

RP may buy 75,000MT of rice from Thailand, Pakistan

By Rica T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINES IS LIKELY TO buy 75,000 tons of milled rice from Thai and Pakistani suppliers, who submitted the three lowest bids during the National Food Authority's (NFA) first open tender this year.

The lowest bid was $472.71 per ton submitted by Trophe International Asia Pte. Ltd. from Pakistan. The next lowest bids were $496.28 per MT from Thailand offered by Thai Hua Co. Ltd. and $487 per MT of Thai rice offered by Asian Golden Rice Company Ltd.

Vietnam rice was offered for $504.50 per MT by Vinafood2, the largest rice exporter of Vietnam.

Trophe offered to source 15,000 metric tons of rice from Pakistan. It said it would make two deliveries of the shipment: 5,000 MT in August and another 5,000 MT in September.

Thai Hua, one of the leading rice exporters of Thailand, said it could deliver a total of 30,000 MT. It said it could deliver 10,500 MT in August, 12,500 MT via break bulk delivery and another 5,000 MT for shipping in containers in and another 7,500 MT via break bulk in September.

Asian Golden Rice said it could ship 30,000 MT in two tranches—half in August and the rest in September—whether via container or break bulk shipping.

The three best offers submitted were about 70,000 MT of rice but the requirement for the open tender is only 75,000 MT.

Besides Trophe, Thai Hua and Asian Golden Rice, no other exporters participated in the bidding.

The highest offer was for Pakistan rice as well, offered by Emerson International of Reno at $526 per MT.

Eleven trading companies had expressed interest to bid but only 10 submitted offers. Of the 10, only nine companies made it through the eligibility screening.

NFA spokesperson Jun Rosqueta said the 75,000 MT of rice for delivery by September would help ensure rice supply during the lean season.

The 75,000 MT will bring the country's rice imports so far this year to 1.775 million MT. About 1.5 million MT were earlier reported from Vietnam via government-to-government contract and 200,000 MT were brought in by private traders.

Besides rice from Thailand, Pakistan and Vietnam, some bidders offered to deliver rice from Myanmar and Cambodia. These were, however, rejected.

Cebu Pacific at T3:

Serving happiness to every Juan

Cebu Pacific Air's new home at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 or simply T3 is giving passengers more reasons to smile and fly with the Asian flagship carrier.

According to its growing roster of satisfied passengers, convenience, friendly service, faster check-in and world-class facilities top the list as to why they're happy to fly Cebu Pacific from T3.

"I experience more comfort and organized service. Checking-in alone is a lesson more efficient and less crowded," said Regional Driver Jazz David.

"The (Cebu Pacific) staff greeted me with smiles at the check-in counter and promptly attended to me," enthused student Miguel Limot. "The comfort room is also nice and clean."

Passengers also enjoy improved connecting time of no longer having to leave the terminal in order to catch connecting domestic and international flights.

Another advantage of T3 is that even non-passengers can now enter the airport's spacious check-in lobby and arrival lobby, unlike other domestic or international airports in the country. This gives the passengers more time to spend with their loved ones before having to board the plane.

"It was a first time for our family to send my dad away for a long-term job abroad. Upon arriving at the terminal of Cebu Pacific, I was surprised to learn that we can spend more time with him inside the airport while he awaits to board his plane," shared Ana Mendoza, an employee in Makati City. "The arrivals area on the second floor enabled us to relax and enjoy a last meal together as a family. It means so much to have that kind of opportunity and I'm so thankful to Cebu Pacific and T3 for having this facility for such moments."

Of course, the carrier's lowest-ever round-trip remain the factor to bear in regard to Cebu Pacific's growing dominance in the Philippines domestic air travel industry.

"Flying Cebu Pacific has always been my choice when traveling domestically or to Asia because it is the most affordable airline in the Philippines," revealed entrepreneur Kim Pelayo.

Attesting to the company's phenomenal growth, Airline Business Magazine's May issue reported Cebu Pacific as the third largest low-cost carrier in Asia and 22nd in the world. It flew 6.7 million passengers in 2008, up 22 percent from 5.5 million passengers in 2007, making Cebu Pacific the fastest growing airline in Asia among the top 25 low-cost carriers worldwide in terms of passenger carriage.

In April 2009, Cebu Pacific broke its own record for number of passengers in one month after it moved 853,419 passengers in 10 international cities and 21 domestic destinations.

The newest and biggest terminal at the NAIA complex, T3 began operations last July 20, 2008 with 10 inbound and outbound domestic flights from Cebu Pacific. On August 1, 2008 the local carrier moved all of its domestic and international operations to the terminal where it now operates its fleet of 10 A319, 11 A320 Airbus aircraft, and eight turboprop ATR 72 aircraft.

Japanese agency affirms RP rating

R&I expects the Philippines to grow in '09 despite crisis

By Michelle V. Ramos

JAPAN-BASED RATING AND investment information Inc. (R&I) has affirmed the Philippines' investment grade rating of BBB-.

In a statement, R&I said that its basis for the rating, it took into account the country's ability to maintain positive, albeit much slower, growth despite the global economic turmoil.

"The probability that real gross domestic product will slip into negative growth in 2009 appears to be low," R&I said, notwithstanding projections by some institutions that the Philippines will plunge into recession this year.

R&I said the Philippines' external liquidity was also relatively healthy with the country's gross international reserves (GIR) reaching a record high of $39.6 billion as of end-June.

GIR, the total foreign currency reserves, shows a country's ability to engage in cross-border transactions, such as importation, with the rest of the world.

R&I, however, revised the outlook on the Philippines to "stable" from "positive," which means that it does not expect an upgrade in the country's rating in the short-term.

R&I cited the government's rising budget deficit and uncertainties over when it would finally be able to close the budget gap.

R&I said President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier vowed to put the country's fiscal house in order and close the deficit, but achieving those goals was now uncertain given the presidential elections next year.

"It will be necessary, however, to see whether the administration that takes office after Arroyo also pursues a course to fiscal health, and to follow the trend of the Philippine economy," R&I said.

"In the 2009 budget, which incorporates fiscal spending to stimulate the economy, the fiscal deficit is projected to expand further to 3.2 percent of GDP (or P220 billion). The ratio of outstanding central government debt to GDP which the government had steadily reduced from its peak in 2004, is expected to rise as well," R&I said.

A GOOD HARVEST

(From left) Danao del Rosario Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario, Campanola Valley Gen. Antero Ilo, Nestlé Philippines Inc. president and CEO Nanda Nandlekhani and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap inspect a branch of ripe coffee cherries at the Nestlé Experimental and Demonstration Farm in Tagum City. The DA and Nestlé Philippines earlier signed a memorandum of understanding to promote green coffee production in the Philippines. They will share technical expertise and resources to train thousands of Filipino coffee farmers on the right farming practices.

Premiere expands into BPO sector

By Mike Morales

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION has allowed a subsidiary of tycoon Tan Yoenieo Encarnacion's Philippine Inc. (PEP) to amend its bylaws to reflect its growing interest in the booming business process outsourcing sector.

PEP told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that the SEC had approved the amendments to the incorporation papers of PEP Administrative Inc., including the change of its name to Premiere Outsourcing Inc.

In the disclosure, PEP Inc. said Premiere Outsourcing Inc. would be handling its voice and non-voice (Troubled services, customer development, solicitation, data transcription, engineering design and business/knowledge process outsourcing activities and related services.

Prior to the change of its charter, PEP Administrative was one of four recently incorporated subsidiaries of PEP handling the company's horse racing interests.

In February, PEP acquired Digitronic Solutions Inc. through a share swap. Acquiring as its subsidiary, Digitronic develops online casino games like Texas Hold'em Poker and Baccarat, among others, which are provided to casino operators like the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

PEP started operations in 1948, under the name Philippine Petroleum Products, during the movie "Pedrangana." After a name change in 1988, it ventured into Kongmundo productions.

In 1996, it went through a corporate restructuring to expand its interest in the entertainment industry and again changed its name to Premiere Entertainment Philippines Inc.

BSP: RP to avoid '97-style asset bubble

By Michelle V. Ramos

DESPITE FALLING INTEREST RATES AND rise in liquidity in the system, the Philippines will likely avoid another asset bubble similar to what caused the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has assured.

In a statement to refute the current liquidity, Bangko Sentral chief noted that current policy is geared to set assets in the Philippines were not indicative of potential asset bubbles in the short to medium term.

"If we consider latest rental values and land prices, these are still significantly lower in real terms than during the 1997 financial crisis, a period when there was excessive liquidity that found its way to an asset bubble," he said.

Tetangco made this statement when asked about one foreign analyst's projection that the Philippines and other Asian countries are likely to suffer from another asset bubble because of extremely low interest rates.

HSBC economist Frederic Neumann, in a recently released study, said governments around the region are again committing the same mistake they made in the late 1990s when excessive easing of monetary policies led to asset bubbles and eventually to a financial crisis that pushed economies in the region almost to collapse.

Asset bubbles happen when excessive rises in the system causes a sharp increase in demand, fueled by speculative activities, that pushes asset prices upward. The "bursting" of the bubble happens when demand suddenly evaporates, leading to sharp falls in prices.

Neumann said Asian central banks, unlike their United States and European counterparts, should not subsequently use their key policy rates because the region is not experiencing the same severity of the crisis besetting Western economies.

Tetangco said, however, that in the case of the Philippines, the central bank was making sure liquidity in the system remains sufficient to help lift the economy from the slowdown and not cause an asset bubble in the future.

Earlier, the BSP reported that money supply in the local economy grew by 15 percent in May, accelerating from the 13.7 percent the previous month.

This measure includes currencies in circulation, travelers' checks, check deposits, time deposits, savings accounts, money market deposits, foreclosure deposits and repurchase agreements, among others.

The latest growth of money supply was fueled partly by an increase in bank lending. According to the central bank, outstanding loans extended by commercial banks reached P1.13 trillion as of end-May, up 10.2 percent from that in the same period last year.

The global crisis may have forced some banks to exercise caution in lending, but this did not deter growth in credit. BSP said. Growth in lending only slowed down, after surging about 20 percent last year, but the rate is still brisk enough to remain this year.

Tetangco said growth in lending, which was aided by the BSP's series of interest-rate cuts since December, was needed to help growth after the economy posted a meager 0.4-percent expansion in the first quarter.

He said growth in liquidity and that in bank lending have been at healthy levels that are showing enough to spur asset bubbles. In fact, some monetary officials continue to urge banks to accelerate lending to aid the economy further.

RP eyes bigger share of Taiwan food market

THE MANILA ECONOMIC AND Cultural Office said some of the Philippines' top suppliers of agricultural and food products showcased their finest at the recent 19th Taipei International Food Show (Food Taipei 2009).

Antonio L. Basilio, Mecos resident representative and managing director, said the four-day food exhibition held last month at the Nangang Exhibition Hall in the Taipei World Trade Center was a great opportunity for 35 Filipino participants to promote their export-quality goods to Taiwanese and international buyers.

Last year's Food Taipei drew some 4,000 overseas buyers and more than 24,000 domestic visitors from the retail and food service sectors.

Basilio said Mecos's trade and investment team organized successive business meetings between Filipino suppliers and Taiwanese buyers during the event, helped open up supplier opportunities for Filipino food manufacturers with Taiwan's leading retail companies, and conducted immediate follow-ups on quality leads and activities generated from the trade show floor.

"We saw a substantial room for growth in Taiwan's food market, with the growing interests of Taiwanese consumers," Basilio said.

Filipino participants included Philippine Fruits International Corp., Pinoy Artisano Corp./CG Harina, KF Seven Foods International, Andok's Food Corp., Cordillera Coffee Company Inc., the Bel Royal Products and Amarich Marketing International.

iRemit to open in Italy

FILIPINO-OWNED CASH TRANSfer firm iRemit plans to open a branch in Italy, one of the countries with top sources of remittances.

"The prospect of doing remittance business there has been very encouraging because of the sustained demand for Filipino workers to be deployed in the service sector," iRemit chair Ramon Dizon said in a conference in the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Acknowledging that the move to put up a branch in Italy seemed belated, iRemit president Harris Jacildo said the firm had to focus on other matters first before venturing into another expansion.

"I feel we think that now is the best time to enter Italy and [we are that it is] a lucrative market for the company," Jacildo told reporters in an interview after iRemit's annual stockholders' meeting.

He said it was only a matter of time before the company opened its new branch in Italy, home to about a quarter of a million Filipinos, because documentary requirements were still pending.

iRemit has branches in the United Kingdom and in Florence.

The company also said the bourse that it was also "looking forward to establishing its presence in Switzerland and Greece either by incorporating subsidiaries, or through partnership with major remittance operators."

With a report from Mike Morales

Enrile bills to cost gov't ₱21B, says DOF

By Amy R. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT COULD LOSE UP TO P21 billion in revenue if the measures contained in Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile's two power bills were to be implemented.

During the Manila Overseas Press Club Senate media forum Monday night, Department of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said Senate Bill No. 3202, or the Electricity Rate Reduction Bill, could cost the government P114 billion in revenue. Also, P7 billion could be lost with the enactment of SB 3149, or the Uniform Franchise Tax Act.

The two bills share the same goal of lowering the cost of power in the country and are expected to benefit all electricity consumers.

Teves said that Senate officials would work closely with the staff of the source to verify their assumptions.

SB 3149 seeks the adoption of a franchise regime where utilities are to be slapped a 3-percent tax on gross distribution income in lieu of all national and local taxes.

SB 3202 will reduce royalties collected by the government from indigenous energy resources from 60 percent to 5 percent of net sales proceeds.

"Actually in terms of the direction, I have no problem. I mix the passage of the power bills). My concern is the timing because of the revenue impact," Teves said.

Georgia-Gil reducing power rates. Enrile said the savings power bills would provide the consumer that the local economy needs to survive the onslaught of the prevailing global crisis.

He said these measures were also expected to benefit 4.86 million lifeline power users who would be getting discounts ranging from 10 centavos to 50 centavos per kilowatt-hour to 67 centavos.

In particular, those consuming 100 kWh monthly can expect savings of P67 from their monthly bill estimate of 95%, while those consuming 20-30 kWh are expected to save P13 from a monthly bill of P23.4.

Century upbeat on market

By Dandee L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY market remained relatively buoyant throughout the global financial crisis with builders continuing to struggle with a large backlog for housing.

According to real estate developer Century Properties, the local market has yet to catch up with demand for residential units, with the backlog estimated to stand at 600,000 units by next year.

John Victor B. Antonio, the company's chief operating officer, said government efforts to address the housing demand has been encouraging with around 3.1 million units from 2010 to 2030, as developers failed to cope with the increase in sales.

He added that the strength of the demand for residential units stemmed from the market's shift to land-asset investments, following the meltdown of values in financial instruments and equities, as well as the prevailing low interest rates and the relatively stable peso exchange rate.

There is also the perception that prices of goods and services will remain as opposed once the world economy recovers, he explained. Because of this, real estate is perceived as a good hedge against inflation.

Antonio also said Century Properties posted a 20-percent increase in sales in the first seven months of 2009, despite broad expectations of a slump in the property market, especially for firms that rely on a significant amounts of revenue from overseas Filipino buyers.

The company attributed this to the sustained rate of investment by expatriate Filipinos in the country. The latest Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas survey showed that Filipino workers abroad showed a significant increase in inward investments in the second quarter of 2009, at 8.3 percent of total funds remitted from the previous quarter's 5.9 percent.

These developments encouraged Century Properties to maintain its presence in key growth areas, as well as other developers announced setbacks in their revenues following the recession.

4 RP corporations . . .

From page B1

top upgrade.

The outlook assigned by Moody's to all four corporate entities is "stable." That means that the existing credit ratings are free from risk of downgrades for at least a year.

The other day, Moody's announced that it raised the Philippines' sovereign credit rating by a notch—from B1 to Ba3—because of its resiliency in the face of a global downturn.

2009 budget gap . . .

From page B1

Next week, Teves said it is a statement he agreed with observations of various institutions that the government would need to improve collection to continue providing for the needs of the people.

"With the continued support of President Macapagal-Arroyo and of Congress, we hope to see legislation . . . that would further enhance government revenue, such as the proposed simplification of the excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol products," he added.

In a report issued last month, UBS said it estimated that Philippine deficit spending this year could be the highest since at least 1981, and as a percentage of GDP the largest in six years.

"We see two contributors that the P250 billion deficit target can be met," UBS said. "The government's newly revised GDP growth forecast range of 0.8 percent to 1.8 percent is still overly optimistic, with our own estimates pointing to growth of 0.0 percent."

The bank added that revenues collection would continue to be a strain, even as the government lowered its revenue target to P1.229 trillion from P1.296 trillion.

Cash . . .

From page B1

Considering the results of the study, SMC and BPO firms should consider providing more non-cash rewards that focused on improving the quality of life of their personnel.

These would not only help compensate retain their talents, but would also ease the pressure on BPO firms to give out cash in cash-strained instances.

"Such incentives do much to address real and important employee needs and concerns, often without cash outlays. They also serve to foster loyalty and commitment," SMC said.

"Vendors and suppliers that will believe that cash is the only form of incentive in offshoring countries are missing the opportunity to derive higher performance and retain key performers. Empowering individuals by providing a better quality of life from work and even from life opportunities in the work environment will be a leading retention practice," it added. Abigail L. Go

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar D. Mangosong

Chemicals find their way to dining tables

By Tessa B. Salazar
Contributor

THERE IS GROWING evidence that chemicals and toxins ingested by or injected into onion producers' livestock and poultry are finding their way to the dinner table, and are distressingly playing a bigger role in the increased incidence of aggressive diseases in humans.

Biochemistry, molecular and nutritional oncologist Apolinario Rosary de Villa, dean, College of Medicine, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, revealed during the July 23 Philippine College of Physicians Health Forum in Quezon City that the cure for faster livestock production in the agribusiness sector has resulted to practices that are unsettling to doctors and women, considering the breeding ground for new strains of viruses and toxins.

Veterinarian Rosemarie Amorgo, who heads the viral vaccine production laboratory of the Bureau of Animal Industry, told Inquirer Health: "What's disturbing in food production is the abundance of enzymes, drugs and growth promoters in meat. The residues are dangerous. One drug is to limit the content (of these drugs) in food."

Amorgo explained that what made the fulfillment of this duty more difficult was the fact most inspectors limited control in overseeing slaughterhouses unless solely over meat the municipalities and provinces become "developed" and local government units were tasked with overseeing local slaughterhouses by assigning their own meat inspectors. She explained that it was during "development" that fast and steady disease "became uncontrolled."

Even when livestock were rarely ever sick, FMD, local meat inspectors allowed these to be slaughtered for the market, she said.

'Brahmanmania'

Another BM veterinarian who refused to be identified urged the public to be wary of locally processed foods sold in town markets such as tapa or longganisa. "Some of us call their longganisa embalsamado. Some longganisa makers do not consider the correct proportion of meat and mixtures. They just keep putting more mixture."

According to household-use enzymes, sodium nitrate (NaNO3) and its close relative sodium nitrite (NaNO2) are food preservatives found in processed meats such as salami, bacon, pepperoni, bologna, ham and bacon. They preserve the color of the meat (meaning it looks pink rather than the gray of hamburgers), and they also inhibit bacterial growth.

Sodium nitrite reacts with stomach acid and other chemicals in the stomach to produce nitrosamines, which have been shown to cause cancer in animals when consumed in large quantities. Its use is carefully regulated in the production of cured products in the United States and conversion to finished products in Brahmi to 200 parts per million and usually lower.

Food safety concerns

National Meat Inspection Service deputy director Manda Mesamen told Inquirer Health about the Philippines' lack in most developing economies, livestock raising falls almost entirely in the hands of the farmer. The Bureau of Agricultural Statistics figure points to 78 percent of total pig population found in backyard farms.

"It is wrong to say that we don't have food safety concerns," refused to sue Bernardo. But she have farmers (and the government is trying to encourage more of such) who have adopted modern methods in livestock raising and they do use tools, medicines as practiced in western economies. Likewise, we have microproducers makers who introduce illegal methods of farming and harvesting as they engage to the trade of food animals," Mamesan said.

Dr. Jaime Montoya, executive director of the Philippine Council of Health Research and Development, said the country does not have local data of diseases attributable to consumption of animal products. "But we do get case reports of doctors reporting cases of patients contracting illnesses due to ingestion of specific types of food. For example, contamination of milk and dairy products with Salmonella, Listeria and E. coli are not uncommon."

Montoya added: "What am I to be concerned with parasites, particularly if not well-cooked. Tapeworm can be present in poorly cooked pork and Taenia saginata or beef tapeworm can be seen in poorly cooked beef and steaks. Taenia solium can cause seizures in patients who ingest poorly-cooked pork as the larva of the parasite can migrate to the brain and behave like a tumor."

A formula to keep us energized

By Charles E. Bohol

ALL LIVING CELLS MUST produce energy in order to survive.

But the process behind the cell's ability to produce energy is so complex it eluded scientists for years until 1937 when Hungarian Hans Adolph Krebs finally explained how living cells convert the potential energy of a variety of nutrients into the readily available energy.

"To put it simply, Krebs cycle—as this process is now known—is the 'power plant' (that) energizes all mammalians and thus, life itself," explained Dr. Edmundo Labadan, medical director and CEO of Growrich Manufacturing Inc.

A few years ago, Labadan began to collaborate with his chemist wife, Thelma, and was able to formulate Krebs-C, a food supplement specifically designed to aid Krebs cycle.

Needed vitamins

"We have chosen only the needed vitamins and minerals—and in right amounts—to optimize Krebs cycle, and thus keep one energized all the time," Labadan explained.

The doctor noted that most vitamins and minerals supplements in the market have formulation that doesn't directly benefit Krebs cycle.

"A lot of them contain too much amounts of one vitamin or mineral, which is almost always excessed by the body afterward. It's a waste of money, if you come to think of it," Labadan said.

Adverse effects

Labadan also warned that in some cases, vitamins or minerals might coexist in the body and accumulate, causing adverse effects later on.

"The human body can withstand only so much of one type of vitamin or mineral. For example, too much vitamin A or D is not good as both could get excreted in the body's fat and liver and eventually cause adverse outcome such as dry and ashy skin, fatigue and worse, cirrhosis of the liver," he explained.

Labadan added that having Krebs-C approved by the Bureau of Food and Drugs and made available in all Mercury Drug stores is a positive assurance of Filipinos ingesting it.

"It should be noted that Krebs-C is presently Philippine-made, having developed and manufactured in capsule and syrup form) at our laboratory in Cabuyao City," he said.

Responding to changes

"PLANTING RICE IS MORE FUN," THE song says, but three varieties of rice developed by the International Rice Research Institute (Irri) could offer farmers crop yields under challenging environmental conditions also of interest to researchers elsewhere.

One of the rice strains Irri developed is a salt-tolerant variety that the institute said could be planted on the approximately 400,000 hectares of coastal Philippine farmlands currently do not use because of the soil's salinity or a result of the seawater.

Irri, a rice-based, last month, University's Intergovernmental Dynamic-graphic Constitution considered a new definition of seawater, which most people simply think of as "salty water from the ocean." The new definition takes emissions to salt levels and seasonal variations into account through a factor known as "electrical conductivity."

Irri scientist Trevor Mc-Donald made the case for the new definition in Geneva, supported by colleagues from Germany and the United States. In a statement, he expressed the new measure definition to be more widely accepted within the next year and a half. If that happens, researchers to make more accurate climate change models based on how water the waters actually are.)

Irri also is working on salt-tolerant crop varieties. A paper by Australians and British researchers published online July 7 in the journal The Plant Cell described a way to reduce the movement of salt to a plant. The scientists used a plant model for their experiments but are working on applying the technique to crops such as wheat and rice.

DISCOVER

Maxine Sandra Balbon

Nahuay affects the growth of plants worldwide, particularly in irrigated land where one third of the world's food is produced. And it is a problem that is only going to get worse, as pressure to use less water increases and quality of water decreases," said University of Adelaide agriculture professor and study team leader Mark Tester. "Helping plants to withstand this salty onslaught will have a significant impact on world food production."

Drought-tolerant rice strain

The second rice variety Irri developed could benefit the approximately 1.3 million hectares of upland rainfed land that is completely dependent on rainfall.

That drought-tolerant rice strain is expected to produce about 10 percent more yield than "standard" rice varieties under good rainfall conditions. When the rainfall is less than expected, however, its yield is nearly a one-more per hectare compared to the other rice varieties.

Developing drought-tolerant crops belongs to related investigations in a similar vein being conducted by Israeli scientists on a native plant that they call the desert rhubarb. As described in the March issue of the journal Nature Biotechnology, the plant looks like it's been bombarded by rocks and grows in desert soil that receives about 3 inches of rain annually. It turns out the desert rhubarb's broad leaves allow the plant to self-irrigate by collecting nearly six times as much moisture annually than the average rainfall.

The third rice variety completes the drought-tolerant rice strains previously mentioned. This is a deepwater rice variety that survives being submerged underwater for more than two weeks, which could prove useful to the nearly 400,000 hectares of rice fields when impassable when typhoons hit, and produce yields of up to 3 tons per hectare. Irri researchers estimate the flood-tolerant rice variety could reduce annual crop losses by a quarter of a million tons.

"Having rice varieties that can cope with difficult growing conditions such as flood, drought and salinity will be particularly helpful for poor farmers who rely on marginal land to grow their rice," said Irri program leader and plant breeder David Mackill in a statement when the three rice varieties were introduced.

"Rice-growing land that has limited productivity will become more productive when these new rice varieties are used."

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Misgivings

MEDICAL FILES

Rafael Castillo, M.D.

overall impact will be much more than expected, however, its yield is nearly a one-more per hectare compared to the other rice varieties.

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Boosting the immune system

AS THE THREAT OF INFLUENZA A(H1N1) virus continues to spread in our country and the whole world, every individual is responsible to take good care of himself and pay more attention to health.

The best ways to protect yourself from catching the illness is to boost your immune system.

Natural ways to boost the immune system exist. Clinical studies showed that the status of the immune system is pivotal in preventing and treating viral diseases and that antioxidants play a key role in maintaining a healthy and strong immune system.

Glutathione, the mother of all antioxidants, the master detoxifier and manager of the immune system, is helping your immune system do its job of fighting infections and preventing cancer.

Raised glutathione levels

Lucida DE, which contains glutathione, is also the most powerful part of your body's detoxification system. All the toxins stick onto glutathione, which then carries them into the bile and the stool—and out of your body.

Taking Lucida DE capsule every day also helps to reach the level of your serum and physical functions. Research has shown that raised glutathione levels decrease muscle damage, reduce recovery time, increase strength and endurance, and shift metabolism from fat production to muscle development.

Keeping yourself healthy, boosting your performance, as well as preventing disease and aging depends on keeping your glutathione levels high.

Body's master antioxidant

Glutathione is considered as the master antioxidant of the body. Whenever our bodies are under severe stress, glutathione is there to give us the maximum defense by donating electrons to free radical toxins that have imbalance electrons. Free radicals are molecules with imbalance electrons that tends to take away other electrons from its neighboring healthy cell.

When there's antioxidants, the body is expected to hasten the aging process, elevates dark spots or liver livers. Glutathione is not just a drug for liver only but also for skin and immune.

Lucida DE is patented 100 percent natural food supplement which, taken daily, can support the human immune system. It is not a drug, but a food supplement, and has no known negative side effects.

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BUSINESS

Solid earnings results hint at recovery in US

SINGAPORE—AOLE) RESULTS FROM companies including heavy machinery firm Caterpillar and phone maker LG Electronics hinted the global economy is on the mend, but Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke warned rising unemployment could yet weaken the US recovery.

After a brutal slump that began in the second half of 2008, the world is starting to head down the long road to recovery spurred by low interest rates and hundreds of billions of dollars in stimulus spending by governments.

Banks have loosened lending, company profits are improving and stock markets have rebounded strongly after sinking to their lowest level in years in March.

"Better conditions in financial markets have been accompanied by some improvement in economic prospects," Bernanke told the House of Representatives Financial Services Committee.

But while housing and household spending appear to be stabilizing, unemployment is likely to remain unconfortably high into 2011 and could sap fragile consumer confidence, he warned.

"The (Fed) believes that a highly accommodative stance of monetary policy will be appropriate for an extended period," Bernanke said.

The Fed and other central banks have cut benchmark interest rates to record low levels and introduced unconventional measures to encourage growth.

Lower borrowing costs and an uptick in demand have helped companies post improved results in the latest reporting season, with many beating analysts' forecasts.

Caterpillar posted stronger-than-expected second-quarter earnings and raised its full-year outlook, citing signs of global economic stability, though cautioning that the third quarter would be tough.

Fourth Bavaria's LG Electronics reported a record quarterly profit that easily beat forecasts thanks to solid demand for its phones, flat screen TVs and appliances.

And Apple Inc.'s quarterly profit blew past Wall Street estimates thanks to strong sales of Macs and iPhones and higher-than-expected gross margins.

The solid earnings boosted US stocks, with the main indexes up between 0.3 and 0.8 percent.

Asian shares also rose, with MSCI's index of Asia-Pacific stocks outside of Japan rising 0.5 percent, up for a seventh straight session and hitting a 10-month peak.

"Shares are continuing their upward momentum on the back of the latest set of solid earnings, and as foreign investors keep buying," said Jim Yeung-yuen, a money market analyst at SK Securities in Seoul. "But given the market' latest gains shares are losing s bit of steam."

Japan's Nikkei average added 0.7 percent, with firmmaker's cautious view on the economy ripping share market gains and boosting the yen.

Short Interest sweight results from companies including Fed and Morgan Stanley will be in focus later, along with remarks from the Bank of England's July meeting.

Reuters

Meralco and DMCI Homes partner in building energy-efficient homes

The Manila Electric Company (Meralco) and real estate builder and developer DMCI Homes signed an agreement in promoting an energy-efficient way of life. Meralco will conduct energy-efficiency seminars, display tips on buying and using appliances at model units and distribute energy efficiency brochures at DMCI Homes' events such as the Tivoli Garden Residences Open House held last May 23, 2009 (inset). Among the signatories of the conforme agreement were DMCI Realmo Marketing Manager Cherrie Lyn V. Cruz, Project Directors Alma A. Florendo and Adolmer G. Trinidad, Managing Director Alfredo R. Austria and Meralco's SVP and Customer Retail Services Head Roberto N. Almazora, VP and Corporate Marketing Head Miguel L. Lopez, VP and Customer Relations Head Ruderico Marquez and SAVP and Marketing Programs Head Melinda Dimpo.

Wellness With Water

Bathing with warm water helps relieve muscle tension

Bath time is one of the few leisurely moments we can give ourselves as a reward from the hectic pace we live. It is also the best way to begin and end each day. Dureen, a frontliner in the world of skincare technology, shares 3 wellness tips for bathing.

Relaxing bath ritual

Taking a bath after 5 o'clock in the evening is an ideal way to relax after the day's activities. Add oil to a bath as hydrating agents that nourish and ease tension. Bath water should not be any warmer than 37°C. Adding a relaxing ingredient to the water like lemon balm or vanilla is especially good for the body. It's guaranteed that you'll be so relaxed, you'll go into a blissful sleep.

Should you take a piece to this evening then you should either shower or have a bath with a minimum temperature of 36°. Don't spend longer than 10 minutes in the bath and choose an invigorating fragrance such as pine, juniper or ginger.

Cold bath temperatures – above 36° Celsius – have been found to help relieve aching joints, help reduce swelling and improve circulation. Cold baths are also said to help relieve the symptoms of depression.

The effects of temperature (warm/cold) are the feeling of weightlessness (hydrostatic effect) can play an important role in treating circulation problems, muscular conditions and reduced muscular mobility. Immersion in water with its support for body weight, provides relief for joints and muscles. So, both cold and warm baths can be beneficial. Whether to use relaxation or to invigorate, for both we the feeling of well-being. Yourself presents great importance on the health and personal well-being.

Bubble and Scrub Baths

Bubble and fragrances can create positive sensory experiences and help to effect an overall sense of well-being. The effect of such ethereal oils can be obtained by adding them to the bath or using an aroma lamp. Eucalyptus, pine, and lemon balm are a few of the scents for preventing and relieving colds, headaches and muscle pain. Pleasantly activated scents that can such as orange, vanilla, and ginger invigorate both body and spirit and to awaken and refresh the senses.

Relaxing at Bath Time

A bath pillow makes things even more pleasant and can provide some much needed support. Relaxing to read the news and circulation as well as making the long journey more comfortable. The Aroma Therapy pillow is a Dureen exclusive item and contains even better relaxation, making it a worthwhile investment. And bath time pleasure is also best in one of Dureen's new premium bodies, made with cushioned contoured bases for more.

With over 200 years of manufacturing mattress, bedsteads, bathroom furniture, accessories, baths and showers, Dureen, all locations. Bath time is best delivered best with Dureen.

Dureen is exclusively distributed by Accent Enterprises Inc. located at 2/F C. Rodriguez Sr. Bldg., 1071 Aurora Blvd., cor. Boni Ave., Brgy. Mauway, Mandaluyong City. Tel. 911-1111 to 15. Fax 911-1116. Email: accent@accent.com.ph. Website: www.accent.com.ph.

FACE VALUE

2010 ISUZU Crosswind Front liner.

The Isuzu Crosswind Mall Tour hits the road in July 2009!

July 8-10	SM City Iloilo
July 9-10	SM Megamall
July 9-10	SM City Fairview
July 9-10	SM Mall of Asia
July 9-10	SM City Manila
July 9-10	Alabang Town Center
July 9-10	SM City Bacoor
July 9-10	Brick Stone Mall, Tuguegarao City
July 9-10	SM City Hoosier Pangasinan
July 9-10	SM City Cebu
July 9-10	Limketkai Mall, Cagayan de Oro City
July 9-10	Waterfront Cebuana, Cebuanican City
July 10-10	SM City Pampanga
July 14-20	SM City Davao
July 16-22	SM City North Edsa
July 16-22	SM City Bacolod
July 16-22	SM City Sta Rosa
July 16-23	SM City Marikina
July 17-23	SM City Iloilo
July 20-26	Gateway Mall, Araneta Center

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PROPERTY

Edie Cesar D. Mangosong

LICHANCO's iconic Chamberlain's chic and sophisticated exterior

A taste of the world in one place

Text and photos by Charlie L. Rubio

CALL SOUTH FORBES a multi-cultural city because this 250-hectare development of Century Land Inc. in Silang, Cavite, hosts a myriad of lifestyle options from Chateau de Paris, French-inspired residences, to Tokyo Mansions, Japanese-inspired houses.

"Indeed, wherever you may choose to live here at South Forbes, you will find that each themed residential cluster features exquisitely designed homes as well as facilities distinct to the place," explained Stally Tia Ansoal, Century Land executive assistant.

South Forbes will feature several themed residential clusters includ-

STORY: B2.3

Greenification of cities around the world

GENERATING NO CARBON EMISSIONS or becoming carbon neutral is the goal of one of the latest buzz words, green building. Carbon emissions are condemned by positive environmental actions.

By now, many people have a clear idea of what makes a building green. Issues about energy use, water, materials, site and indoor air quality easily come to mind. The overriding objective is to reduce global warming and safeguard health.

However, this is not the case when it comes to making cities green. Public perception about cities and what makes them green is not unclear.

What makes a city green?

Green features of urban areas are varied as their cultural differences which are greatly influenced by their location and how green/living lifestyles are adopted.

For example, some cities have turned to sun, wind and hydropower for their energy needs. This is the case with Malmo in Sweden. The city plans to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 25 percent between 2008 and 2012. This exceeds by 5 percent the goal set by the Kyoto Protocol.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amanda de Souza

About 40 percent of its citizens depend on bicycles and general transport is by emission-free electric street trains.

In Copenhagen, Denmark, the government invested in a water quality warning system to monitor the pollution levels of their waterways. This ensures for its safe and clean inclusive waters that add prestige to the city.

Copenhagen is famous for its windmills, a clean source of energy. Its offshore windmill park powers 22,000 homes in the city which is about 3 percent of the city's energy needs.

One of the greenest cities in the United States is Portland, Oregon. It has allocated 92,000 acres of green space for biking, hiking and running trails. What's more, it has put into use an urban-growth boundary to limit the urban landscape and expansion to protect 28 million acres of forest and farms.

Many cities, including Manila would benefit from such a law which puts a cap on the city's expansion.

Portland has a very efficient mix of commercial and residential areas which are pedestrian and bike friendly. About one-quarter of the commuters bike to work.

It also plans to install solar-powered parking meters in the metropolis.

Most livable city

To be labelled not only as a green city but also as the most livable city is something that the residents of Vancouver in Canada successfully be proud of.

Vancouver is a coastal city that leads the world in hydroelectric energy, which makes up 90 percent of its power supply.

Fossil fuel dependence will be greatly reduced as the city invests in wind, solar, wave and tidal energy sources.

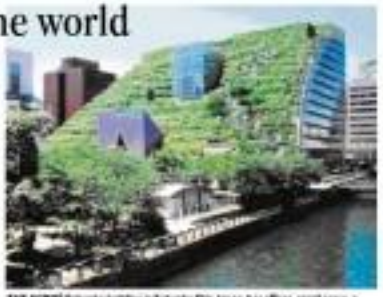
How does the most livable city cultivate its water? It uses solar-powered trash compactors, each the size equivalent to a normal trash can but can hold five times the waste, which means less air-polluting garbage trucks roaming the streets.

Promoting the use of locally sourced building materials is a sustainable practice. That means using materials that are extracted, processed and manufactured within 800 kilometers of the construction sites. Transportation costs and fuel use are minimized.

Since deforestation is responsible for 25 percent of climate change, green cities lose no opportunities to practice reforestation.

Green cities do their environmental planning generally based on renewable energy, energy efficiency and reforestation.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amandadesouza@gmail.com.



THE ACROS Fukuoka building in Fukuoka City, Japan, has offices, retail space, a 1,000-seat theater and a museum. Its green roofs and walls cascade luxuriously into public parkland.

MAHOGANY PLACE III

Bela model home highlights Asian contemporary theme

IN PLANNING THE INTERIORS of a new home, there's currently plenty of trendy design options to choose from.

In the case of the Bela model unit at Mahogany Place III, the DMCI Homes interior design team combined a look described as "modern Asian contemporary" with touches of luxury and elegance while infusing function and efficient space planning for a home that is both elegant and comfortable.

The grand design of this 240-square-meter, two-story, single-detached property follows the architectural theme of homes at Mahogany Place III, a development targeted toward sophisticated homeowners who value space and luxury in the metropolitan setting as exclusive, secured and prestigious address.

The beauty of Bela

Bela, as its name implies, is all about beauty. The furniture is modern, but the décor is a continuation of Asian-Oriental pieces. For a single-detached model home, the design aspires for grandeur while maintaining space and offering flexibility and timeless appeal.

This adheres to the philosophy of the design team to add depth to the designs, infusing it through texture and use of function and practicality. A general look of luxury pervades around the home, but still cozy enough to entertain guests or spend time in one.

THE DINING area

THE LIVING room is a showpiece that highlights comfortable modern furniture softened by colorful throw pillows and rugs and organic elements.

BELA Model home highlights Asian contemporary theme at Mahogany Place III.

BEDROOM 2 achieves an edgy, masculine feel through the use of contrasting colors and patterns.

The living room is a showpiece that highlights comfortable modern furniture softened by colorful throw pillows and rugs and organic elements. Lighting from Living Crafts and Decor Lights enhance variable moods of the area, while light translucent from draperies completes a look of sophistication, drama and modernity. Wood, meanwhile, exudes comfort and warmth for that classic look.

The dining area exudes elegance, with a dining set from Dimon Furniture hyping Oriental look and organic elements and here they can complement the feel of a functional area that's just as luxurious. Subtle settings are simple yet elegant enough to have that look of luxury. Bough Brown arrangements and simple table décor.

Standout features of the kitchen will impress homeowners, with a granite island counter top and elegant cabinets complementing its overall look. The center island functions as a preparation area and stock bar, giving homeowners the ability to entertain guests. The second level of Bela's model home features 2 rooms—the master quarters and two bedrooms.

The master bedroom is reserved for occupants with a penchant for luxury as seen through the furnishing, accents and touch of extra space. A walk-in closet and a bathtub are standard features in the Bela unit, together and gold studs, luminous fabric, accents and draperies are added to make the look of sophistication. Draperies can also enjoy work area, reading lounge and grand balcony that overlook a charming neighborhood.

Touches of pink and olive combine to add character to the second bedroom, which is designed for a young teenage girl, while the third one achieves an edgy, masculine feel through the use of contrasting colors and patterns. Both rooms, while appearing like showcase areas, retain a sense of practicality through the addition of functional furniture and versatile accents.

Various spaces around the house allow for different activities and functions, such as the main area which is appointed with a large window, and wide hallways that can be filled with easy furniture.

The design team extends the motif to add character to these spaces, such as a new canopy for the huge windows in the second floor. Showing and contrasting colors of the side panels play on the height and motif.

The special area is found in the hallway at the second level, where anyone can just sit comfortably while reading a book. A modern-style curtain bed is set across a large framed window and below an inverted pagoda roof.

Grand lifestyle

Mahogany Place III offers homeowners a host of amenities, concierge services and first-rate security features. A premiere development of DMCI Homes, it is an 8.6-hectare prime property located within Tawanday, Quezon City, Philippines.

The project is accessible to the several business districts of Makati and Ortigas and links to major roads via C-5. Only 330 residential units are available to achieve a low-density development addorned with wide spaces and verdant gardens.

Other model homes are Tamara and Helena which are 120-sq-m, three-story duplex units; Ariana, a 143-sq-m, three-story single-detached unit; and two types of townhouse units called Gaia and Isella.

A taste of the world in one place

LICHI&DCO-designed Ayutthaya model unit will feature garden-like rooms separated by pools.

BETTINE Ivy (right) and Cynthia Alexaris inside Meiji model unit, their latest creation

From page B6, 1

ing South Forbes Villas (Mediterranean-inspired), Tokyo Mansions (Japanese-inspired), Chateau de Biele (French-inspired), Bali Mansions (rustic, Asian-inspired), and Phuket Mansions (Thai resort-inspired).

Best interior designers

To really convey the character of each residential cluster, Ayala Land Premier tapped the services of some of the country's best interior designers, namely: Dan Liebacon and the 40-some staffers—Ivy and Cyn-thia.

Liebacon did the 98.7 sq.m. Tokyo Tokyo Mansions, 99.1-million Chanhouse and 99.1-million Francaise/Ideas of Chateau de Biele, 99.3-million Tuktuk and P17.4-million Ayutthaya of Phuket Mansions.

The Alexaris sisters on the other hand, worked on the 84.3-million Alexaris and 94.3-million Gaiellos of South Forbes Villas, P27.8-million Meiji of Tokyo Mansions, P13.2-million Lovina of Bali Mansions and P13.5-million Chalet of Phuket Mansions. Select package accessorized here includes interior decorations and accessories placed).

"We gave them a free hand in designing the interiors and the result was simply stunning. Visitors were amazed and in fact, a number of them even bought the model units or requested Cynthia to get their services to design the unit they're going to buy," Fe Amoni revealed.

In designing the interiors of the two model homes inside Chateau de Biele, Liebacon said the units' tall, large windows and doors, high-filled interiors, high ceilings, and rich color palettes ensured the right setting for placing locally sourced furniture having modern-French Art Deco design influences.

Target buyers

The result is the Chanhouse model unit (total floor area: 101.30 square meters) that hopes to attract senior yet hip couples and the Bonnie/Clyde model unit (total floor area: 204.50 sq m) that should appeal to younger set of buyers with preference in bold, sophisticated and very chic design.

When the Alexaris sisters were assigned to design the Meiji model unit, they had fun with the Japanese Zen theme.

With its generous living area and lots of open spaces, this home emphasizes openness and freedom of movement. Light is also given attention as it could freely enter every part of this with 525.13-sq.m. total floor area) house.

"We wanted to have interior space that blends seamlessly with the [outdoor] garden beyond. We also used low accents, as we wanted to achieve the clean and serene look. For this home, it is more important to choose the right item to combine than to have a lot of different things in the room," Ivy explained.

Indeed, the homes inside South Forbes are remarkable as well as unique.

Another example is the Ayutthaya model unit that Lichauco designed. Inspired by Thailand's love for spa, Lichauco created an atmosphere of complete relaxation, openness and spaciousness.

Each of the three gardens (like room of Ayutthaya is separated by pools creating "islands."

Lichauco explained that while each room will be made up mostly of wood and glass, the 450-sq.m. lot will have carefully placed walls and dividers to ensure privacy of the occupants.

"It was the intention of Cathay Land President Jeffrey Ng to create a resort home that will soon rise within these themed residential cluster of South Forbes to be special. Not only would the future residents feel privileged but also realize how successful they have become as they enjoy exquisitely designed homes and incredible ambiance of the unparalleled surroundings," Fe Amoni said.

THE HEIJI model unit features cavernous living area and lots of open spaces that blend seamlessly with the garden beyond.

THE THRIVING Presidio community ... where bayside living is lush and relaxed.

Crown Asia's Bellini sparkles at Presidio

CROWN ASIA ADDS ANOTHER [illegible] project in Presidio, its sprawling San Francisco-inspired [illegible] development at the head of Lakefront in Sucat. Bellini heralds in addition to the symphony of 16 Aves/Mansions towers that will populate this [illegible] city by the bay.

Upon Bellini's scheduled turnover in October this year, it will join the ranks of Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Picasso, Monet and Renoir, the first five mid-level and high-rise condominium masterpieces in the thriving community of Presidio. These buildings are ready for occupancy with studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units to choose from.

"The rise and much-anticipated turnover of Bellini reaffirms our commitment to homeowners in providing living spaces that positively and refreshingly redefine modern living. It separates the spirit of Presidio, a community inspired by career and progress—an everyday hideaway to come home to," said Crown Asia Chief Operations Officer Mary Leo Sadhwa.

THE VIVA! interiors make entertaining part a pleasure.

Condo units

A lush life brimming with cool comfort and quiet luxury is only within one's grasp at Bellini. This 9-story island-size condo offers cozy studio and spacious one-bedroom units ranging from 29.4 to 50.56 square meters, perfect for the single go-getter or couples ready to start their lives together.

Residential units are elevated from the 2nd to the 5th floor while commercial units are conveniently located at the ground floor. Units are affordably priced starting from P1.6 million with the lowest monthly amortization at P9,399.

At Bellini, residents can wake up to a spectacular view of the Laguna de Bay or the serene scenic picture at the amenity area. They can also revel in the many facilities, stand-out disciplined and convenience Presidio offers by virtue of its strategic location.

In this resort-like township that inspires breezy bayside living, residents can readily reach Makati in 15 minutes and Ortigas, a mere 25 minutes away. In close proximity to schools, malls, commercial establishments and the domestic and international airport make it ideally accessible to metropolitan comforts and amenities.

Amenities

Where Presidio, homeowners—young and old—can enjoy amenities like the resort-style swimming pool at the Village Center, the multisports center, game room and fitness center. Then there is the clubhouse, complete with a social hall and function rooms for events.

Crown Asia offers more fashion-forward homeowners an outstanding array of homes and amenities. Find the space to fulfill your dreams at Aisle 1 in Alabang, Avanil, Cris Italia and Residences in Cavite; Fortuna in Laguna, Mesa Alta, and Mille Lux in Antipolo; and Pembroke in Danny Dan's Alabang.

Cityplace attracts Chinese-Filipino traders

AS THE BEST BUSINESSMEN KNOW, location is the main key to a successful business. That's why Cityplace is the most sought-after development by No. 1 residential condominium developer Megaworld Corp. this side of Manila. It is located within central Chinatown, the thriving money-making enclave of successful Chinese-Filipino traders.

Cityplace, located on Reina Regente Street, is made up of three phases with the following: two towers that are both more than 33 stories high, a shopping mall and two spaces reserved for future commercial areas ready to entrepreneurs who seek to find a base for their business in Manila will discover that Cityplace is perfect due to its Binondo location. It is also right across the 1.68-Ha mall and makeover area from Divisoria.

THIS model unit at Reina Plaza, Binondo, gathers how traders can grow their business from Cityplace.

Spacious units

There are only five spacious units per floor with provisions for breakfast bars or wet cubicles TV, which means you can see weekend condo and save a lot by working from home. This is especially advantageous for those who are into trading, buy and sell, or are just about any type of business.

In addition to all of these excellent features, Cityplace also has its own shopping mall within the premise where your one-stop, restaurant or boutique can be set up. Imagine being able to live right above where you work. You can cut your travel time, avoid traffic jams, be more efficient, save gas and have more time to entertain.

Unit owners also have the option to lease their property, or sell it as a profit later on. One- to four-bedroom units are available. Now is the best time to buy before prices increase any further. With the minimal monthly amortizations at Cityplace, it can be assured that their monthly cash flow will not be affected much. Your unit will even increase in value as the years go by.

CHINESE-FILIPINOS continue to grab units at Cityplace because it is a great business [illegible] Megaworld

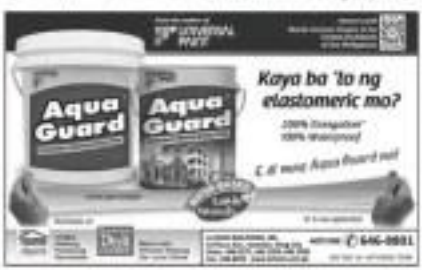
Location

"The excellent location of Cityplace within Binondo and their ability to do business within the area from Cityplace are the major considerations for Chinese-Filipino Cityplace condominium to attract Chinese-Filipino investors," Megaworld Newport Property Holdings Inc. AVP for Marketing and project head John Natividad declared.

Those with families will find the residences not only well situated but also comfortable, for besides the developments are banks and corporate towers, vital to one's [illegible] or trading, obtaining a unit at Cityplace is a convenient and smart choice. Instead of spending huge amounts to stay at a hotel for days or weeks, Cityplace owners save more money in the long run. It is especially good for those with businesses in the Binondo and Divisoria areas.

This development is destined to be the gathering place of the most profitable and vibrant Chinese-Filipino enterprises. At Cityplace, you have the best of Chinatown at your fingertips.

To invest in Cityplace, please visit the Cityplace showroom at Burke Plaza, San Armando cor. Sto. Cristo St., Binondo or check out www.cityplace.com.ph.



MANHATTAN Heights is the new phase of the bestselling Manhattan Garden City project at Megaworld in Araneta Center.

Megaworld launches third phase of Manhattan Garden City

Leading property developer Megaworld Corporation has launched the third phase of one of its bestselling township projects, Manhattan Garden City.

Dubbed Manhattan Heights, the new phase will feature an additional four towers. Manhattan Heights will add more than 1,600 units to Manhattan Garden City. The first tower will have 406 residential units, all feature living/dining, kitchen and toilet and bath. Unit prices start at P1.6 million for a studio, P3.7M for a 1-bedroom and P5.1M for a 2-bedroom suite.

Manhattan Heights will be located across Ali Mall, where a transport terminal is now located. The site along Gen. Romulo Ave. gives residents easy access to Aurora Boulevard and EDSA via P. Tuazon Boulevard.

With Manhattan Heights' connection to the other parts of Manhattan Garden City through garden walkways and footpaths, residents will enjoy unprecedented mobility. All they need to do is board the LRT2 and MRT3, which are seen at the Araneta Center, to reach any point of the metro within minutes.

To maintain Manhattan Garden City's claim as to having the most number of amenities, the country's #1 residential condominium developer is planning more than 20 new amenities for Manhattan Heights. These boost the previously announced high concentration of amenities in Manhattan Garden City's first two phases.

Passive amenities at Manhattan Heights include skydecks, sitting areas and garden views. Active amenities also abound, such as a jogging path, adult and kiddie pools and a playground.

A sky garden at the low lapanat floors of each tower differentiates Manhattan Heights among the modern buildings within Araneta Center. While being an aesthetic feature, the sky garden also has the environment for its footprint.

This green rooftop development concept employed at the fourth floor podium deck is aimed at lowering the levels of pollution, while the sky garden's plant life also cleanses the air and reduces heat stress, high above the metro.

THE environment-friendly sky garden is a unique feature of each residential tower at Manhattan Heights.

To know more about Manhattan Heights, please call 813-3333 or check out the Manhattan Garden City showroom at the 3rd level of Gateway Mall. Or visit www.thenewmanhattangardencity.com.

'Greening' gains mainstream momentum

HAVILA
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Come home to a place where nature inspires art.
Havila, a 300-hectare township named after the mythical land by the river of Eden.

Through the years, Rizal province has earned the reputation as a hub of art and culture. It has beckoned artists and their families to live and thrive there. Now, you too can live amidst beauty that inspires.

Make your home in Mission Hills in mystical Antipolo. Or in the cozy climes of Highlands Pointe and Villa Montserrat in Taytay. Or even among the luxuriant trees of Forest Farms in Antipolo. All these captivating communities are part of HAVILA, your own Eden.

The exceptional advantages of Havila:

- Recreational facilities, commercial areas and schools like San Beda College and PAREF Southhill School are located within Havila for the convenience of its residents.
- Accessible to Assumption, La Salle in Antipolo, La Salle Greenhills, Xavier School, Ateneo de Manila, Miriam College and University of the Philippines.
- Lifestyle conveniences like SM Taytay and the Ortigas Business District are just a short drive away.
- Medical City and Cardinal Santos Medical Center are within easy reach.
- The challenging courses of Valley Golf and Forest Hills Golf & Country Club are close by.
- A link road connects all the communities to each other and to outlying areas for ease of travel.

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FILINVEST

By Vera B. Salazar

FOR A GENERATION THAT REGARDS the world it lives in with former interest, the terms "greening," "energy efficiency" and "environmental sustainability" are no longer confined to advocacy groups.

Just this week, the city of Makati, in its objective to become Southeast Asia's first energy-efficient city, had signed on for Greenpeace's "Simple Lang, Love the Climate" campaign.

The Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, a 300-member group of developers nationwide, had also revealed to Inquirer Property its long-term plans to develop "green townships" by dedicating hundreds of hectares of secluded housing into "green villages."

In the private sector, Ayala Land Inc. has recruited plants for the Ayala Greenfield Estates in Laguna to become a sanctuary for diverse flora and fauna.

Sanctuary

Jose Ariel Argel, head of the Land and Human Division of Ayala Land Premier, revealed in a press statement that "natural lovers will truly enjoy living in Ayala Greenfield Estates, where 30 species and 25 families of endemic and migratory birds such as doves, woodpeckers, flower peckers, swallows, seagulls and shelters can be seen."

He added: "After a long day people can relax at the tree house and picnic huts surrounded by gardens at the 15-hectare Nature Park."

Environmentally safe

In the commercial sector, Pacific Plains (Pasar) Philippines, which claims to use the latest development in nanotechnology has produced a so-called "revolutionary water-based paint that converts common air pollutants into harmless substances in an environmentally safe process called photocatalysis." Buyers with Global Global (a producer of titanium dioxide) is conducting the world's largest air-cleaning paint trial at the Guadalupe MRT station in Edsa.

Between studies smaller-scale tests conducted in Europe have proven the effectiveness of the technology in significantly reducing levels of air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (known to cause pulmonary diseases and a precursor for smog and acid rain), sulfur oxides and particulate matter.

Compliance

Meanwhile, HLRA President Bayani Chua provided Inquirer Property with a board of investments copy that calls for new developers to comply with BOI's new planning program requiring a minimum of 100 hectare were planned no later than one year from the date of registration.

Chua also revealed sewage treatment programs of CDAs and developers.

"This is a project in coordination with the LGUs whereby they require all subdivisions to provide bins for segregation of recyclable and non-recyclable waste, and then the local government units collect them and will or dispose of them."

The press statement reveals that the Greenpeace Makati project will include extensive public awareness campaigns and establish a multisectoral working group that will introduce energy-efficiency measures in schools, hospitals, commercial establishments and businesses. Among the first steps will be the development and implementation of "Energy-efficient Building Guidelines, which will be launched late this year.

Part of the goal is to help combat climate change by reducing the city's carbon footprint.

Camella Communities unmasks new face in urban living

CAMELLA COMMUNITIES IS UNmasking a new face in urban living on 6 p.m. today at the Waterfun, Camella SeaOpolis, no.1 JF Laurel Avenue (formerly Bajada St.) in the heart of Davao City.

For more details, please call Welcome or Ribocon at (082)297-4000 or at 0917-8076972.

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Final boarding

THERE ARE SOME things history books won't tell you about. But a new film on the Philippines' most baffling whodunit attempts to fill in the blank pages.

During the past three weeks, the never-ending trailer of "The Last Journey of Ninoy" has been spreading like the seasonal flu on YouTube and various social networks—and inducing its viewers with a serious case of goosebumps.

It opens with a front-page headline: "Ninoy Aquino assassin upon return, murder plot exposed!" Cut to a scratchy broadcast of Marcos, the presidential seal at his back, saying, "Now if he wants to come back here, then sure, by all means." In a US television interview, Ninoy wearing his signature specs and a smart blue suit, intones, "I will go back because I think I'm innocent. And FYI, Marcos would like to shoot me on that basis, then so be it."

Set to heart-pumping music and cue-the-crapping cuts like "ground conspirators," "clandestine meetings," "secret conversations" and "dangerous deceptions," who can blame the trail-

FINAL BOARDING C2

GREAT FINDS GALORE.
A-LIST STYLE.

GARFIELD
BY JIM DAVIS

ANG LIPIN
BY JOSE ARIOLA

FUSAO BARDY
BY BYL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHOMKO

JAMES BOND

DIKING COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK
BY RAMI COLL

BEH
BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMO AND WEBOT
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

BIRD MACHINE
BY MANN ABIERA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): Be thoughtful to your significant other today. Computer crashes, power outages, cancelled appointments, and other inconveniences are best done remotely. But things can be fixed.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is an excellent time day for children or with your friends. Be sparing in parents and teachers. Be reserve to play a bit rocky. Take it easy. Romance-related activities by you-know-who.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Disruptions at home or within your circle (buddies) are likely today. Family members might be rebellious or unsupportive. Minor breakages could occur.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a really good day for you, as the universe favors you. Be careful about what you say, because there are plenty would be willing to put words in your mouth. Think before you speak or do anything.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 23): Watch your money today. You might find yourself in a position to lend money to someone, or you might lose money. You might break some rules, but you should go somewhere in a New York minute.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might be obsessed with something trivial. Independent people might irritate you. You definitely feel restless and possess explosive energy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might feel unsure today and feel hesitant about making decisions. Be careful with what you say. Don't worry about this, because this is a very brief, passing influence. In fact, everyone in the world feels sometimes.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Unexpected events with friends—especially female friends—could be interrupted or troubled with conflict. You might want to be aware with someone. Don't make a big deal about anything.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day to go forth and do it with authority. Be assertive, decisive, and confident. Your energy is high. Your mood is positive. Your luck is with you. Don't be rebellious, either—trust your gut.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Travel plans will be interrupted today. Delays, cancellations, and other annoyances are likely. Be extra patient and understanding, and be flexible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Impulse shopping (for clothes, jewelry, electronics, books and cosmetics) is likely today. Try to postpone these discoveries for another time.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be extra aware when dealing with authority figures and close friends today. Everybody in the world feels restless and easily irritated today. Don't panic. You (and tomorrow) is worth waiting for!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

	4						8	
3				1				7
			2	6	5			
	9	1				4		
		5				2		
		3				1	9	
			4	5	7			
2			3					4
	5						1	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

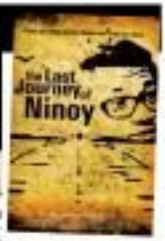
Answer to previous puzzle

2	1	3	4	6	9	5	8	7
5	7	8	3	2	1	9	6	4
4	9	6	5	7	8	1	2	3
8	2	1	9	5	7	4	3	6
6	3	9	2	1	4	8	7	5
7	4	5	8	3	6	2	9	1
3	8	4	1	8	2	7	5	9
1	6	7	6	9	5	3	4	2
9	5	2	7	4	3	6	1	8

Final boarding

From page 61

CORY Aquino in an interview in 2008



...ert's pandemic effect?

Produced by Erstad Productions with the Benigno S. Aquino Jr. Foundation (BSAF), "The Last Journey of Ninoy" is a 180-min. documentary that chronicles the final eight days of the slain senator's life: his hateful, six-leg journey that took him to Los Angeles, Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong and Taipei before his bloody assassination at the Gate 6 tarmac of the Manila International Airport on August 21, 1983.

Three years in the making, the landmark film features never-before-seen footage of last television interviews, smuggled tape recordings, military tribunals and phone conversations, as well as revealing excerpts from the exiled statesman's private diaries and personal letters. Between her chemotherapy treatments in 2008, her last grueling year, Cory Aquino also faced the cameras and carefully narrated the most gut-wrenching period of her husband's life.

"In 2006, I stumbled upon an old article, Noynoy's Final Journey," by ABC News correspondent Ann Kinkaid about Ninoy's brother-in-law who accompanied him from Taipei to Manila, shared Unicef's Jun Reyes, the film's director and co-writer. "I felt that it was a strong foundation to tell Ninoy's life story—it had all the elements of suspense and mystery."

Reyes immediately pitched the concept to his cousin, Raya Lopa, executive director of the BSAF. "It soon became a project of project for Raya and me," he says. "We both believed that an updated film on Ninoy was needed—particularly for the youth, and given the country's current political situation."

"Last Journey" follows, sometimes, according to Reyes. First, it examines the details of Ninoy's physical, multiple-flight journey back to Manila from his exile in the US...a moving account which has never been told in detail until now. Simultaneously, a parallel narrative of Ninoy's personal, spiritual journey while in prison also unfolds.

"His trip from Boston to Manila was used as a dramatic spine to convey this personal evolution," says Reyes. "The public must know that the seven years and seven months he spent in prison—ironically, seven was Marcos' favorite number—brought about a cathartic transformation, if that did not happen, he would have never decided to return home and look death in the face. This was the story Ninoy wanted to tell."

The former president was remarkably frank in her interviews, which were shot in various locations over the past two years. Despite her condition, her mind on the set was "light and lovial," according to Reyes. Other revealing sound bites were extracted from a set of private interviews conducted by writer Rinna Lopa-Hurtarez, when she was compiling her memoirs for a possible biography on Mrs. Aquino in the mid-'90s.

Sourcing and scouring the archival footage—which included family videos from Hurtarez, Ninoy's memorable "Face the Nation" TV interview with Bonnie Sitakowski in 1978, home videos in Boston, and scene moments at the Taipei Grand Hotel and Tomas Morato mansion—proved to be major undertakings. They were fully restored and color-graded at United's post-production facilities, Regine Nuesa and Optimus. A remastered recording of Ninoy's last phone conversation with Steve Hurtado (a leading figure of the Movement for a Free Philippines), which took place during his layover at the Los Angeles International Airport, was also used.

To fill in the cinematic gaps, Reyes and another cousin, cinematographer Glow Vistan, shot re-enactment scenes using a small cast of actors, including TV host Iñaki Aquino, who played his late uncle. "Ironically, the airport scenes were shot at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport," says Reyes, who used 9883 Ultra High Definition cameras to give these poignant scenes a soft, film-like quality. "NAIA does not normally allow shoots, but their guys on special permission gave the subject. I think they had the impression we were shooting the anastasia con scene. But in reality, we really used it [the NAIA airport] to recreate the airports in Singapore, LA and Taiwan."

Last Saturday, Reyes and Raya Lopa were invited to a special test screening of the film, which will premiere in cinemas nationwide beginning on August 22, the 26th anniversary of Aquino's assassination. On August 23, it will be broadcast simultaneously on TV (the ABS-CBN TV network with ABC, Channel 2 and TFC) and through live internet video streaming.

Perhaps it was the gripping soundtrack, or the almost eerie experience of hearing Ninoy narrate the story himself, or the soulful remembrance of the bloody tragedy that befell "the greatest president we never had," but a single eye was dry in the room by the time the credits started rolling. And that said a lot, considering that the small audience was comprised of intellectuals who, in one politically divisive point or another, did not always change into the maroon or yellow-colored sensu.

"There was a real opportunity to tell the story of a real Philippine hero through moving pictures—something we cannot do for Rizal or Bonifacio," says Reyes. "History has a way of hiding things. But through this film, we hope the next generation will get to know the man and continue his great legacy."

LeDonne sense&style

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The 'Ateneo way' of defining Brotherhood: Stories of Chris Tiu and Severino 'Nonoy' Baclao

Christopher John Alcendy Dy-Tiu

His UAAP career could be defined as bittersweet. While that for so long his team was being denied of the coveted UAAP Men's Basketball title and sweet revenge for two first team captain-hitters the ADMU Blue Eagles captured the crown at the expense of the DLSU Green Archers via sweep.

The 6'1" guard is no doubt one of the UAAP's most adored cagers not only with his looks but also with his leadership abilities on-and-off court while maintaining good scholastic records in Ateneo.

Looking back, Tiu shared that his had great memories during his UAAP stint and learning experiences that he could still apply today. "The Ateneo formation is simply holistic." Tiu mentioned that due to Ateneo's support and balanced education, he was able to improve not only on the sport but also on his entire perspectives on life.

He may not be around anymore for Ateneo but Chris Tiu is still a big motivating factor for the team.

Defining brotherhood for Chris Tiu is easy. "Brotherhood is everything you see in the team, everybody's contributing. Brotherhood is everything you can think of like no, just look at how it breaks me."

Severino 'Nonoy' Baclao

His name does as he showed great promise for the young yet formidable Blue Eagles in Season 72 of the UAAP.

The 6'0" point forward did not disappoint his ADMU believers when his team proved superior after sweeping DLSU in their finals series with him being awarded with the Finals Most Valuable Player award.

The blasted native said, "Ateneo is the team that I always dream of, a team where everyone is treated equally and where everyone is given a responsibility not just one."

Now that Chris Tiu is not anymore around, Baclao is assuming yet another role in the team, the veteran. "On my third year, I learn to guide everyone especially the rookies, I should step up."

Defining brotherhood, Baclao mentioned that it is a bond that goes beyond playing court to...

...unlike the breaking sporting apparel lines the brotherhood in the UAAP with Chris Tiu and Nonoy Baclao.

Times change. But the Brotherhood remains.

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Red saves the day

Avoid horror stories about no cellphone signal or connection. Go Red

By Ruby de Vera

THE CELLULAR PHONE IS A BIcentenarian nowadays. The need for communication continued with the rest for the latest phone models make it a very popular must-needed everyday accessory, something we don't leave the house without. But what good is being mobile when you can't connect?

There are many horror stories about bad signal, ranging from being to serious.

Carol is a mother of two and a marine biologist. She spends her weekdays in the marine laboratory three hours by land outside the city, while her husband takes care of the kids back home. One day, they had to travel to a remote island. While she was working, one of her daughters had an accident and had to be brought to the hospital. Her husband knew she was on an island somewhere and was crossing his fingers that he could get through to her. Fortunately, the signal was strong even in that remote place and Carol was able to be with her daughter in the hospital soon after she talked to her husband.

Janice was to be maid of honor for her best friend Kate's wedding, which was to be held in Calamba, the province/hometown instead in Batangas. Janice traveled from Australia for the wedding, and because of flight delays and other things, she was only able to go straight from the airport to the church. She had her hair and makeup done at the salon before proceeding to Calamba, thinking she would just change in a gasoline station somewhere. All the while she had kept Kate's mother updated on where she was and what she was doing, and that it was ok because they had time to spare.

On the way to Calamba, the driver took a wrong turn somewhere and they suddenly found themselves in the middle of a coffee bean plantation. It was a weird sight—a maid of honor in full makeup, coiffed hair and gown, standing next to a coffee tree on a dirt road. She doubted there would be signal in that semi-wilderness, but yes, there it was. She called Kate's mother that they were lost, and the latter guided them back to the main road all the way to the church. The day was saved.

Red Mobile provides clear and reliable network connections, and for only P0.30 per minute, you can be assured of having quality conversations with no interruptions. Peace of mind and a sense of security with your mobile connection are important, because we never really know when we might just need it.

'Barkada' top picks

Yuppies and students share their favorite things to do, eat and see with their closest friends

By Bianca Carvajal

WHILE BARKADAS MIGHT DIFFER TO FIGures culture, it's clear that we love hanging out and keeping in touch with our closest friends. Whether it's hanging out to watch the latest flicks on the big screen, catching up with each other over drinks, or simply chilling out with a video game or TV show, it's important to keep in touch with your barkada.

However, keeping in touch can be quite expensive—thankfully there's now a way to keep connected at all times. Red Mobile makes it easier to send content to all the members of your barkada. Saw something interesting that you want to share with your best girlfriends? Send it via MMS. Want to drop your weekly get-together over barbecue? Make sure you're part of the fun through a video call. Bonding with the latest gossip? Tell the entire story with a long phone call.

While these particular technologies have been available for quite a while, the cost of sending MMS or making video calls was prohibitive—heck, even calling someone for more than five minutes used to be seen as a luxury. But now, with as low as P30 load, you can do more. Send text or MMS messages, and make conventional or video calls for just P0.30 per minute.

Keep your barkada bonded and make sure you get to update your barkada mod-sh*t by constantly keeping in touch—it's never been easier, or cheaper.

Katrina Roa, 25

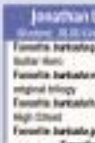
Teacher

Favorite *barkada* movie: "Frankenweenie," "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Harry Potter"
Favorite *barkada* idol: Leighton Meester
Favorite *barkada* expression: "I know, right?"
Favorite *barkada* gadget: Cellphone
Favorite *barkada* hobby: Beach bumming
Favorite *barkada* food: Japanese food from Sanyou
Favorite *barkada* TV show: "Gossip Girl" and "America's Next Top Model"
Favorite *barkada* dessert place: Bengalo

Katrina Villaluna, 24

Events coordinator

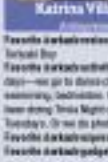
Favorite *barkada* restaurant: Bengalo, Bahadi Bay
Favorite *barkada* activities: "Fitness Saturdays—we go to dance classes, swimming, bodybuilding. Recently, we've also been doing Tennis Nights on Tuesdays. Or we do photo shoots."
Favorite *barkada* expression: "Go for it!"
Favorite *barkada* gadget: Cellphones



Jonathan Lansang, 23

Student, BSBA College of St. Benilde

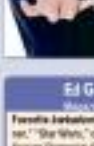
Favorite *barkada* game: Rock Band/ Guitar Hero
Favorite *barkada* movie: "Star Wars," original trilogy
Favorite *barkada* hangout: Magnet High Street
Favorite *barkada* drink: Pina kolada
Favorite *barkada* movies: "Iron I Met Your Mother"
Favorite *barkada* gadget: Cellphone
Favorite *barkada* hobby: Road trip
Favorite *barkada* food: Bbq
Favorite *barkada* site: Facebook
Favorite *barkada* topic: Random-ossness



Ron Dizon, 26

IT Manager, Vertical Focus IT

Favorite *barkada* movie: Filipino: "Ang Mga Kwentong Kutsero" Foreign: "The Godfather"
Favorite *barkada* food: Sinigang Pompano
Favorite *barkada* song: 1970
Favorite *barkada* sport: Basketball
Favorite *barkada* game: Daytona 1 (classic!)
Favorite *barkada* hangout: Dido's Casserole
Favorite *barkada* bar: Sez
Favorite *barkada* drink: Absolut Mango
Favorite *barkada* expression: "Espalit" (Boodpoint)
Favorite Rush Pub order: ESB Light
Favorite *barkada* TV series: "Pattinsons Lalake" and "Mangas and Saxworth na Kwento"
Favorite *barkada* idol: Sammy Lagmay
Favorite *barkada* celebrity: Amanda Bynes
Favorite *barkada* singers: Eraserheads
Favorite DJ: Dash of Mix 101



Ed Gerenia

Management auditor

Favorite *barkada* movie: "Black Forrester," "Star Wars," original trilogy, George Romero's "Living Dead" films, Monty Python's "Life of Brian" and "Holy Grail"
Favorite *barkada* expression: "Your in the mind killer," "It's it goes"
Favorite *barkada* idol: Ray Bradbury, Kurt Vonnegut, Paul Auster
Favorite *barkada* gadget: Sony E-book Reader, Canon DSLR

Anapet Miclat, 23

Office clerk, Lopez Holdings / Student, St. Scholastica

Favorite *barkada* movie: "Rocket"
Favorite *barkada* person: "Extend"
Favorite *barkada* gadget: Cellphone; we love calling each other up all the time
Favorite *barkada* idol: Each other!

Jesse Herrera, 23

Photographer

Favorite *barkada* movie: "Transformers 1"
Favorite *barkada* hangout: McDonald's Katipunan
Favorite *barkada* drink: Hot chocolate at McDo
Favorite *barkada* venue: Family Day
Favorite *barkada* gadget: DSLRs
Favorite *barkada* hobby: Road trips and food trips
Favorite *barkada* food: Steak!
Favorite *barkada* site: Multiply
Favorite *barkada* topic: Work and girls

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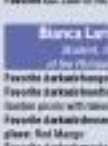
Myrish Manalo, 24

Marketing assistant, De Mason Enterprises, ARCORE

Favorite *barkada* musician: Coldplay
Favorite movie: "Serendipity"
Favorite *barkada* expression: Malicious—what we say to make some one who's kind or dense or spaced out.
Favorite *barkada* hobby: Travel
Favorite *barkada* restaurant: Linda Bhoks
Favorite *barkada* hangout: Regay's
Favorite *barkada* gadget: iPod



Bianca Larisa Yap, 20

Student, University of the Philippines Diliman

Favorite *barkada* hangout: Pool All-stays
Favorite *barkada* bonding activity: A Sunkist Garden picnic with fabulous PR stories
Favorite *barkada* dessert place: Red Mango
Favorite *barkada* movie series: "Harry Potter"
Favorite *barkada* mod-lines: A scenario. In divorcement get togethers
Favorite *barkada* phrase to "Sobrang hot!"
Favorite *barkada* line: "Girl, you owe me an eat-it."
Favorite *barkada* food: Hoon Hoon Bo Tan Hoon (healthy, homemade food all the time!)
Favorite *barkada* entertainment: Reciting scenes from "Dahil Mahal na Mahal Kita"

Luigi Ongjoc, 23

Head of Sales

Favorite *barkada* idol: Larry Page and Sergey Brin—they're the founders of Google
Favorite *barkada* phrase: "It's time to go."
Favorite *barkada* gadget: Laptop
Favorite *barkada* hobby: Traveling and computer gaming
Favorite *barkada* TV show: Hiba and Lilo!
Favorite *barkada* hangout: Computer shop or drinking place

Danica Cervantes, 23

Student, BS Business at St. Benilde

Favorite *barkada* food: The couple would be Shakey's. The pizza curd is awesome.
Favorite *barkada* book: Georgia Nicholson's "A Song of Sue and Pink" saga
Favorite *barkada* Video Game: It used to be World of Warcraft, but default-ed to Rock Band

10 things you need to remember for hassle-free connectivity

By Pan Pastor

DANIELA PHONE ISN'T JUST YOUR KIDS'—IT'S A RESPONSIbility. Here are some rules to remember if you want to stay connected to your friends and family. They're essential for hassle-free connectivity:

1. If you're going to be late, call. And that's not a burden—not with the Globe/tm affordable P0.30 per minute call rate.
2. Do not forget birthdays and anniversaries—even if you can't be there physically. Reach out to your loved ones on these special days—SMS an unforgettable message, MMS a greeting, video call, it's up to you.
3. If a friend is stuck at work while the rest of you are having fun, show him or her how much she's missed. Make a quick video call—so they'll know you're thinking about them and let those juicy on the fun even for just a few minutes.
4. Keep your phone charged. What's the point of having one if the battery's dead?
5. Always return calls.
6. Never send angry texts.
7. If your phone is prepaid...make sure your credit doesn't run empty. You never know when you're going to need your phone for an emergency. Having a Globe/tm account is terribly freeloser-ing—especially if you need to reply to an important text message. Keeping your phone loaded with credit is a breeze, especially now that Red's P30 load is available for 15 days.
8. Know what is too easily and too late. Text and call during reasonable hours. Sure, staying in touch is important, but so is letting your loved ones sleep.
9. Be original. Quit forwarding annoying, sappy, silly text messages. Anyone can copy-paste quotes from the Internet. Why not send something that's really yours?
10. When you're driving, keep your hands off your phone. Your friends and family will understand if all calls come first.

Paint the Town Red

By Ruby de Vera

WE'VE SENT THOUSANDS AND thousands of text messages since we've had cellular phones...and when SMS was invented we all scrambled to send pictures with our messages. With the advent of video calling, now no one can lie about where they are. For only P0.30 per min for video calls, SMS and MMS, take it up a notch and put some extra touches of naughty and kiss using Red Mobile:

1. Send a text message to your sweetheart, but keep simple one. Make it like a puzzle, one that she would have to decode. If she guesses right, tell her she won a special prize. Be creative about the prize or you were with the puzzle.
2. Send your significant other snapshots of your everyday life through MMS, such as the state of your desk at work, your lunch, or maybe even your annoying noisy neighbor. It's like letting her about your day...only better.
3. Send cheesy lines all day long. "I'm ready to change my relationship status in Facebook from 'single' to 'it's complicated.'" "If we were monkeys I'd totally pick out your tick." "Lobsters mate for life. Call you be my lobster?"
4. Be your girlfriend's birthday, video call her so she can watch yourself in two of your friends perform "Single Ladies" by Beyonce. It's totally macho way, of course. Justin Timberlake and the Jonas Brothers did it, don't worry.
5. Sing your favorite song a capella and record it on your phone. Then send it to your beloved as a modern-day serenade.

2oU
LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
Associate Editor Pam Pastor

They love their dogs and how!

By Luis-Carlo San Juan and Ronna Capili

Charlie Brown: I read somewhere said "If a man has the love of a dog, he is already a millionaire."

Snoopy: And that'll buy a lot of cookies.

Peanuts

PEANUTS CREATOR CHARLES Schulz once said that, "Happiness is a warm puppy." These guys agree and say why.

KAREN with her long-haired dachshund Sicilina

Karen Parmintuan, 23, TV host and model

Why did you choose that name?

He was originally named Ross, since I previously had Phoebe and Chandler, but my boyfriend started adding Rick to his name and it stuck.

What is your dog's dominant personality?

He's a happy-go-lucky mommy's boy. He hates Chandler, and just wants to make friends. He likes torturing boys and chasing my cats. He likes to make messes if I leave him at home.

Are there any endearing things your pooch does?

Everything! He begs a lot and is also so cute when he sleeps next to me—he keeps his face next to mine or sleeps with me back-to-back. He cries when I cry and he's actually got a great sense of humor.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?

Ha, he's a klutz! He bumps his head and trips just like I do! And he likes playing jokes on people—he'll run into the back of your knee as full speed for fun.

What was the biggest splurge you've done for your pet?

I honestly like how Sicilina is easy to maintain—it's part of his charm! But I guess in general, he's pretty spoiled. He lives in my room and sleeps on my bed and couch.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?

Treats and toys! He also enjoys trips to the park and Session, and treats from his "papa" Ernest, my boyfriend, ha ha!

What are the games you play with your dog?

He knows how to dance! He also plays fetch, and we play with those sonsun-control toy cars. He loves dancing and smiling then.

How do you spend quality time?

Everything! Sicilina is with me all the time. Walks are his favorite.

How often do you shop for your pet?

No, I don't dress my pet. Though I do le-

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Graphics Design Aldes Joshua Cato

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

The shopping fever is on at The Bellevue

FASHION LOVERS UNITE! GET updated with today's hottest trends and style at The Bellevue Hotel, the luxurious destinations South of the Metro, in cooperation with Four Seasons Creative Ventures, invites you to a different fashion shopping experience on July 25 to 26 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the spacious and air-conditioned Laguna and Alabang Room of The Bellevue Hotel. Look fab and fashion-forward as you scout for the most fashionable finds including stylish ready to wear ensembles, unique accessories, chic local and imported bags and classy bling jewelry pieces all from today's hottest new designers. Shop till you drop as you raid the hordes scouring with a wide variety of novelty and gift items, cute baby clothes, wellness and beauty products, housewares and army patterns and dresses. Aside from the uncurved and ample parking space and the convenience credit card facilities, a tranquil place to rest is in 20 per-cent discount in Café d'Arte, Hotel-side, Pastry Corner and 20/20 Bar, and generous raffle prizes await guests. Major sponsors include Jaguar, Aesthetic Science and The Bazaar. For inquiries, please e-mail Nine Seasons at fourseasons_ph@yahoo.com or contact 0905-8352000.

Making the runway proud with his world-class skills and exceptional creativity, The Bellevue's renown pastry chef Amadeo Mendoza was titled place during the prestigious Hong Kong International Culinary Classic 2009 held in Hong Kong recently. Chef Mendoza bested other entries from various parts of the globe as his winning piece "Spring Blush" clinched him in the Pastry Professional Showpiece Display Category and earned him a Bronze Medal Award. Fittingly, Bellevue general manager Patrick Chan and marketing and communications director Ryan Chan recognized and lauded the chef's brilliant achievement as they welcomed him back to his home, The Bellevue Hotel, the luxurious destination South of the Metro.

CELEBRATING US INDEPENDENCE DAY

United States (US) ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney welcomes a host of politicos and high profile personalities, including celebrities, who grace the cocktail party at the Diarita Paraiso Ballroom of the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel to commemorate the 233 Independence Day. The event which also marks the Filipino-American Friendship Day was catered by Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila.

HOTEL KIMBERLY TAGAYTAY PROMO

Beat the rates and extend the vacations at Hotel Kimberly Tagaytay ahead of their "Book One – Get One" promo. For One Price promo, book one superior room at P4,999 net inclusive of breakfast for single or twin occupancy and get the second room or second night stay for P1,750++ offer is valid until Sept. 30 and subject to room availability. For reservations and details, please call 371-1888.

Davao's Oro Derm Beauty Hotel

WELCOME TO DAVAO CITY AND DISCOVER BEAUTY INSIDE AND OUT. Stay at Oro Derm Beauty Hotel, strategically located at the heart of the City along Magallanes Street. Oro Derm Beauty Hotel has 27 comfortable air-conditioned rooms category and as presidential suite, ultra premium, twin quiet and gaze rooms all confirmed with 29" flat TV, Wi-Fi internet connection PABX telephone system, room call key system, 24 hours of convenience in going up and down through their elevator, shuttle service to and from the airport, in-house facial and body spa services, coffee shop and restaurant. Since you are in town and wish to stay in comfort both in your budget and way, join call their hotline numbers (082) 221-2500/221-2700/222-1122 and a friendly front desk will take care of your accommodation.

A perfect weekend at City Garden Hotel Makati

FOR THOSE WEEKENDS WHERE ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS LAZE AROUND. How about spending a relaxing day or two in a well-furnished room, have a rejuvenating spa treatment, or work out at a gym while the kids are having fun at the outdoor swimming pool? All these you can enjoy without the hassle of long drives and traffic. With rooms for as low as P1,400++ per person on twin-sharing basis, you can choose to rest and relax anytime of the day in one of its fully-furnished rooms complete with a flat screen TV, wifi, room-stocked minibar, and full buffet breakfast at the Le Jardin Restaurant. After a day of fun activities, have a few drinks or take your dinner at the Hotel's Restaurant and enjoy the delectable meal under the breathtaking view of the metropolis at night. A good way to end a great day? Enjoy its drink of the month, "Garden Sunrise", a combination of tequila, triple sec, orange juice, grenadine, and Paradise Mango Rum Liqueur, or its "Rainy Day Beer Special", that offers beer for only P50+ when you order any one of the selected food items. City Garden Hotel Makati is located in Makati Avenue corner Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City. For inquiries call (02)889-1111, or its domestic toll free number 1-800-10-CITYGARDEN (4827336), or (0917-8444316), (0915-8444316), (0918-5940111), (0939-9444316), or e-mail reservations@citygardenmakati.com.

Forty towns on a platter

FROM NOW UNTIL AUG. 2, INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA'S CAFÉ JEEPNEY will embark on a culinary tour of Quezon Province, bounded by towering mountains and the Philippine Sea, the province is known for its delicious table offerings. It is ranked as the fifth largest province in the country and is made up of 40 municipalities. For this special food festival, guest homebaun cooks will prepare native soup, fried beef, pork, fish, condiments, vegetable and noodles dishes from these municipalities' buffet-style for lunch and dinner. As part of the festival, Café Jeepney partners with Cebu Pacific to offer trips to dream destinations. Every P4,000 in a single receipt at restaurant and bar outlets will earn a raffle ticket. Prizes include a Princess Cruise trip for 2 to either the Caribbean or Mexico or the Mexican Riviera. The winner can choose one destination from these 3 destinations and a trip to a European destination of one's choice onboard KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. Raffle period runs until April 16, 2010. Café Jeepney's buffet spreads is available for lunch (12 noon to 2:30 p.m., Monday to Sunday) and dinner (7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., Monday to Saturday). For every group of 4 buffet paying adults, a 5th person gets a free buffet meal. For reservations, please call 793-7000.

50 percent off suite deals at Heritage Hotel

IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 11TH year milestone, the Heritage Hotel Manila launches its 11-day extra sale starting Aug. 1 to 15, with 50 percent off on all suites valid for stay from Aug. 1 to Dec. 31.

Suite deals start as low as P4,888++ for the ultra-modern and spacious one-bedroom suite inclusive of Millennium Club perks and privileges such as exclusive access to the Club Lounge wherein guests can indulge in the complimentary continental breakfast, hors d'oeuvres and all day coffee and tea as well as complimentary Internet access, advantage of personalized service. The executive suite comes with a separate rotary living area with a touch of contemporary art.

The millennium suite and presidential suite which for the record were only reserved for honorables, A-listers and diplomats are part of the limited suite deals promo. Experience the height of exquisite refinements and the perfect view of the famed Manila Bay sunset and the cityscape at the luxuriously appointed 119 sqm millennium suite or the more spacious 130 sqm presidential suite.

The Heritage Hotel Manila is nestled at the crossroads of Metro Manila's main thoroughfares, Ortigas Boulevard and Edsa. It is only 45 min utes away from the International and domestic airports, and the nearest international hotel to the SM Mall of Asia Complex.

Rates for local residents and foreigners with ACR. Booking is direct only, prior reservation is required and is subject to room availability. For inquiries and reservations, please call 954-8888 or e-mail reservations@heritagehotelmanila.com.

Microtel Inn & Suites
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Microtel Inn & Suites
Microtel Inn & Suites

Teen power at the Shang

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE CARVED out a style of their own—from beauty and fashion to music and recreation. As a tribute to the youth, premier lifestyle destination Shangri-La Plaza is holding Teens' Fest, July 10 to 26, at the Grand Atrium, Level 3.

The fest will feature and sell must-have items for today's young people, such as products from The Beauty Bar, The Body Shop and The Face Shop.

Other participants are Ruanni's Department Store, Cravings Department Store, Bench and Pink Box.

Trendy notepads, pens, pencils, notebooks, pocketbooks and fun board games are available at National Bookstore, as well as laptop bags, lunch and book bags from PowerBooks.

Gamers can check out the latest gaming consoles from Q Power, while toy enthusiasts can inspect Ridestation and Market's Department Store's range of popular toy brands such as Line Friends, Moshi and Barbie.

Music lovers will surely enjoy the chill-out and lounge, listening booths and array of CDs at Astrovision.

The Face Shop will conduct a demo on makeup application. Bench will provide easy-to-follow tips on fashion and styling and Body Shop will give a talk on skin care.

THE SHANGRI-LA Plaza is hosting its first-ever Teens' Fest from July 10 to 26 at the Grand Atrium, 3/F

Biggest anime title of 2009

ANIMAX WILL EXCLUSIVELY present the biggest anime title of 2009, 'InuYasha-The Final Act.'

To be premiered across Asia this fall on Animax, 'InuYasha—The Final Act,' is set in an endless tie-in anime week as the series' premiere broadcast in Japan on Nondori TV. A long-awaited sequel to the first and hugely popular InuYasha anime series, 'InuYasha-The Final Act' will deliver a grand finale to the fantasy action and romance series that has won fans all over the world.

Indeed, InuYasha's popularity has also seen the debut of a series of games, as well as fan chants locally-released anime all movies that chalked up over $20m in box-office takings.

Based on Rumiko Takahashi's "Inuyasha ¼," the InuYasha manga series that won the Shogakukan Manga Award for best shonen (youth) title of the year is based on the final 20 volumes (volumes 37 to 56) of the very popular InuYasha manga. Recalling the original staff and cast of the InuYasha anime series, InuYasha-The Final Act is set to return viewers to mystical and chaotic feudal Japan where the story unfolds.

InuYasha-The Final Act continues from where the first InuYasha TV anime series left off, as InuYasha and Kagome, along with comrades Miroku, a cursed monk; and Sango, a demon slayer, continue their battle against demonic villain Naraku for the mighty jewel of Four Souls.

Tours, Leisure & Chow

Travel + Leisure cites Shangri-La luxury hotels

TRAVEL + LEISURE HONORED Shangri-La luxury hotels in the 2009 World's Best Awards. The results of the publication's 14th annual readers' poll will appear in the magazine's August 2009 issue. Among the Top 100 hotels worldwide are the following Shangri-La properties: Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong; Pudong Shangri-La, Shanghai; Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort and Spa, Kota Kinabalu; Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; The Shangri-La Hotel, The Eastern, Pacific Rim, Taipei, Rawsbom Shangri-La, Hong Kong; Shangri-La Hotel, Bangkok; China World Hotel, Beijing; Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort and Spa in Kota Kinabalu placed among the Top 10 Resorts in Asia. Shangri-La's Mactan, Cebu placed on the Top 10 City Hotels in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, while Shangri-La Hotel, Vancouver was voted to the "Up and Coming" list by the editors of Travel + Leisure. The World's Best Awards results are based upon an online survey in which Travel + Leisure readers evaluated hotels on five characteristics: rooms and facilities, location, service, restaurants and food, and value. The publication calculated the average rating of each characteristic and tabulated each property's overall score. For more information and reservations, please contact a travel professional or access the website at www.shangri-la.com.

Culture of service: Microtel Davao

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT MICROTEL HOTELS and its branches all over the country, to the business of providing unpretentious comforts and entertainment for travelers. Microtel is always on top of their game by providing their customers more important needs for an enjoyable stay.

It is a given that Microtel's homey ambiance and warm every guest in any branch with clean-pressure-applied "healthy-for-the-back beds", interior connectivity, 25-inch cable TV, and complimentary breakfast, making it unbeatable in its class. Evident in Microtel chains worldwide is the uniform standard in cleanliness, comfort, safety and value.

The strength of this hotel chain does not stop us in physical features and amenities. The hours and soul of its success pays significant focus on the personalized services it offers to customers for their every stay. This is very true especially for Microtel Inn and Suites, Davao where good service is considered as one of their best strength.

Remembered service can spell the difference between a well run hotel and a poorly managed one. The hotel staff as a whole can control the feeling and presence of the entire establishment.

Situated at the bustling hub of Bankson Gateway Complex, Microtel Inn and Suites Davao operates as a business hotel, with 31 rooms customized for corporate events and private occasions, 25 percent of its guests come from Manila.

Davao's good quality of life coincides with Microtel, behind the sunny ambiance and comfortable amenities that make every guest feel at home, it's the warm smiles of the staff, sincerity of service and their 24-hour availability which makes Microtel Davao a home to every traveler's heart.

ONE MORE FOR LESS AT ONE TAGAYTAY PLACE

BEGINNING JULY 1, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2009 One Tagaytay Place gives its patrons one more reason to stay for much less. Take an additional discount off your room rate for your second night. Avail of the one rate of P3,300nett per night for a deluxe room inclusive of breakfast, taxes, and service charge and be entitled to a very special rate of P1,999 nett, with the same inclusions, for your second night. For more information call their reservations office at 894-4111, 684-4100, or e-mail reservations@oneplace.com.ph or log on to their website www.oneplace.com. One Tagaytay Place is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.

Kopiroti Davao turns 2 on July 31

AS OF JULY 10, GOING IN AND SPECIAL GATHERings of Kopiroti Davao located at L2 Dynamic Davao Building, Jacinto Extension with a hotline number (082) 234-4999 as they celebrate their 2nd year of success in their Singaporean coffee business here in Davao City that coming July 31. As part of their celebration, purchase any of Kopiroti set meals or freshly baked Kopi bun and you can avail their promo rate of Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper for only P10 only. Congratulations to the beautiful couple Dr. Lee and Ms. Zeny, management and staff of Kopiroti Davao for it's success! Philippine Daily Inquirer would like to thank you for the continued partnership. More power!

They love their dogs and how!

From page B1

tend to buy him some brushes and a pomade.

Best doggie products you swear by?

I honestly like this bag of treats called Baby Dog. It seems to get him to do all his tricks and for bonus reading.

Please share your tips on house-training.

Uh, you want to share some with me? Half my room is covered in newspapers.

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles their dog?

The first time I got Boss I realized we had the same hair color! Yeah, I guess it's more of people getting used to seeing you together that make people think that dogs and their people look alike.

Best dog memory/moment.

When Kiddlom first came, he discovered ice cubes. I have so much videos where he gets hovered by me dad, fights stuffy toys, and hides under my bed when I leave. He's just really funny!

Special tricks or cool things your pet can do.

He can beg for a long time, he can hop on his two back legs, roll over, sit, stay and I learn the first and main one, it's you tell him to get it.

How did your pet change your life?

He's my ultimate companion, my best friend and baby. I can't live without him.

André Calleto, 26, UST graduate

ANDRE with his dog Lucho

What do you like about dogs?

They really show their emotion. I love it that every time I come home you see how excited they are to see you. Makes you look forward to coming home.

What's your dog's name?

Lucho, a Chow-chow. The breeders said his name is Lucho, after his dad, a Philippine Hall of Fame show dog. So we didn't bother changing his name.

What is your dog's dirtiest personality?

Friendly and approachable, gives the kisses of his breed.

Are there any endearing things your dog does?

When we're out in the same room at home, he would check on me from time to time just to make sure I'm doing all right. He also "knocks" on my door.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?

He's got my laid-back personality.

What was the biggest splurge you have done for your pet?

Supplements.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?

Bakanda Lamb and Rice dog food

Share tips on house-training.

Make sure he knows you're the master and he's the dog.

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles his/her dog?

I believe that the dog resembles the owner.

What's your best dog moment?

It was the day I got Lucho. It was love at first sight.

How did your pet change your life?

For me, Lucho is not my pet. He's my kid, being responsible for him has definitely made me more mature.

Sam Bently Enriquez, 18, DLSU

SAM WITH Bailey, a Lhasa Apso

What do you like about dogs?

I really find dogs very cute and charming especially when they are puppies. Actually, my pets are not just dogs. Right now, I have fish tanks at home containing Flowerhorns. So, here, I need to care for cichlids, hamsters, birds and different kinds of aquatic animals.

What's your dog's name?

Bailey, a Lhasa Apso. I couldn't think of anything for a name, and one day my little brothers just started to call her Bailey.

What is your dog's dirtiest personality?

She loves going inside my air-conditioned room. She'll really find ways to enter and once she gets in she'll just hide under the bed so no one would notice her and bring her out of the room.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?

Yes. Like me, she's a shy-at-first dog. She'll just stay in one place, lie down and won't mind any people or dogs, but after sometime, she gets the hang of it and starts to mingle.

What was the biggest splurge you have done for your pet?

Not big deals. I really don't compare. I just give whatever I can give her. Playpens, quality dog food, treats, assorted vaccines, toys, etc.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?

Bakanda, I cook for her. Recently, I get food from my family grocery supply (not a secret anymore) like vegetables and ground meat, then cook them in different ways to give my dogs meal variations.

How do you spend quality time? Are there any things you do together?

I cook for her like I said. Also, if I am not that busy with school and other stuff I am the one who groom her, then I use her as a photo subject using my DSLR camera.

Best doggie products you swear by?

Nothing in particular. I just always go for quality of products over quantity.

Share tips on house-training.

To potty-train puppies, place them in a playpen with newspapers for a few weeks so that they'll get used to pooing and pooping on the newspaper.

Do you believe the owner usually resembles his/her dog?

Not really, because if time were true I don't know how am I supposed to look right now.

What's your best dog moment?

Whenever I meet my dog is giving lamb. I feel like I'm the dad of the puppies. Ha ha!

How did your pet change your life?

In one way or another, my pet taught me a lot of values in life. Because of my pet, I learned how to be more responsible and more patient.

Tristan Jeremy Hao, 20, San Beda

Tyrick Pomeranian dog Angel

What do you like about dogs?

Their companionship, because dogs are awesome and friendly!

What's your dog's name?

Angel, a Pomeranian. It was my sister who came up with the name.

What is your dog's dirtiest personality?

She thinks she's a person and she's afraid of all types of dogs. Some big dogs even scare small dogs.

Are there any endearing things your pooch does?

When I come home from school or anywhere, once I open the door she jumps on me and won't stop till I carry her and let her lick my face.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?

Nope. She's unique, really.

What was the biggest splurge you have done for your pet?

I always give her food. Food has certainly more all she can't eat no more!

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?

Food, specifically doggy bone treats. We give her tons of treats, she gives us one-one kek, five-boom. She gets all the bones she wants.

How do you spend quality time? Things you do together?

She sleeps on my bed, actually, on my pillow.

Best doggie products you swear by?

Doggy treats!

Share tips on house-training.

He didn't really train him. She's a mom dog; she poops and pees in one spot, which is inside her cage, that's the only place where she poops or pees.

Do you believe the owner usually resembles their dog?

Yes. My sister kinda resembles her.

What's your best dog moment?

When she poops and something goes stuck on her buns, she sits down and drags herself until the poop is off.

How did your pet change your life?

She never gives us a dull moment, always gives us pranks and shows antics. She just makes my whole family happy.

Pets yes, babies no

Top reasons for raising cats and dogs

By Tobi Yang
Correspondent

WHEN MY FRIENDS STARTED getting married and having kids, it seemed like a viral infection in zombie movies where one bite by a zombie could turn you into one as well. As if overnight, my calendar was marked with dates of weddings and baptisms, my Facebook peppered with birth announcements and pictures of small, bald, wrinkly faces (the baby's, not the husband's).

So a girl living with two teenage boys, the concept is still too foreign to me. Whenever I think of marriage and children, I get shivers up and down my spine—not from excitement or anticipation. I find the idea rather frightening, something I am not inclined to want in the near future. It's like having onions in ice cream.

I didn't like sharing this opinion because of the reactions I'm bound to get—either patronizing platitudes (a la well-meaning "Oh, sweetie, it's just because you haven't found love yet"), or disbelieving "Are you crazy?" stares.

Honestly, I'd rather raise dogs than children.

Listening to friends gush about their bundles of joy I don't think there's much difference between raising a puppy and a baby. Sometimes, when they share a funny anecdote about their child's latest amazing caper, I want to chime in, "What a coincidence, my dog did that, too!" except again, I'll get that "Are you seriously comparing your dog to my baby?" glare.

Here are the reasons I think dogs could make for better children.

Birthing process

Puppies can be easily had from pet stores and breeders. Newborns alone has still open stall of little furballs, eagerly wagging their tails and looking up at you with those "take me home" eyes. Babies—well, I don't like pregnancy that will wreak havoc on my body, causing weird food cravings, water retention and mood swings. And I'm not talking yet of childbirth. Yes, this reason alone, I should all put our mothers up a pedestal, where they should stay—forever.

Cuteness

Let's face it. Not all babies are born cute. When faced with a not-so-attractive baby, you are duty-bound to coo and appeal. Dogs can be ugly as hell, but eventually they develop a "so ugly, it's cute" sort of charm. Unfortunately this really doesn't apply to humans. Plus, you can choose a cute puppy. A baby you need—forever.

Education

My friends with preschoolers tell me it costs much to send their kid to a play school and the amount makes me want to faint. Now with a dog, once you've taught him to relieve himself in one area, sit and stay, you've pretty much covered elementary and high school. The play-dead and roll-over skills are considered Masteral.

Cost

Once, a social studies teacher of mine asked us to roughly estimate how much our parents spent on us in a year. The one in only sniggering, and that's only for the necessities. Factor in all the toys and others extras, and you easily have to give your parents props for not only hoeing you and clothing you, but for not leaving you must for anything. All a dog needs to survive is food and water. A toy can be an old sock, or a piece of rope. Dogs won't ask for the designer, console or a Louis backpack.

GUCCI, the owner's dog

Upkeep

Dogs are pretty low-maintenance. Their day-to-day existence is eat, sleep and play. Once a puppy has gotten all its shots, visits to the vet become a once-a-year thing, unless if he ends up swallowing an action figure. It's easy to entertain them, too. I once kept our puppy Akita easily happy by letting him fetch those socks that don't have their mates anymore.

Growing-up years

All it takes for a puppy to form a lasting bond with you is for food to enter a dog. After that, you will have a fan for life, a furry creature who will worship the ground you walk on. A dog's adolescence is rare, telling him to stop humping the furniture and chewing up your slippers.

A teenager? Pick. I should know. I was an even teenager once, and I'm sure my parents wished that the worst thing we had to fight over was me guarding my footwear.

No answering back

Sometimes, as the mall, I crack him

BEHIND the wheel

SLEEPING like a baby

throw major tantrums screaming "I hate you, I hate you!" at their beleaguered parents, and are again reminded of the beauty of having a dog. To date, in the course of disciplining my naughty furkids, the most serious I've gotten from them is a sharp bark or an irritated snarl.

Real maidenhead in this time and age is really extreme sport. It's high octane, requiring a huge heart and excellent patience. As much as I admire all the moms I know, right now, I'd rather be the during mom, with all the mad joys and angsty times. I prefer to ensure my motherly instinct outing for my four-legged furkids. They're an easier audience to please, like babies who never grow up.

They love their dogs and how!

From page D1

SAM POSES with her clean-cut Shih.

Irmah Samantha Lim, 20, UP Diliman

Why did you choose that name?
Shiloh—his name is from Dumyor Pindo, the basketball player, because my boyfriend, also a basketball player, gave him to me as a birthday gift.

What is your dog's distinct personality?
He scores a lot and sleeps all the time. Plus, he rolls his eyes every time you take a picture of him.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pooch/s?
He licks my feet. He also sleeps curled up just like a baby. A big baby, that is!

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?
He loves the outdoors and he's so playful.

What was the biggest splurge you've done for your pet?
Doggie treats. As you can see, he's fat!

What are the games you play with your dog?
Do running and chasing count?

How do you spend quality time?
We usually go to his vet's together.

How often do you shop for your pet?
I don't, because he's too big and he's never without clothes—you get to see how fat he is.

Best doggie products you swear by?
We span at Madison Square, Greenhills, Cesar and Pedigree for dog food (he loves them). And Avenuedog as the best dog-friendly place.

Please share your tips on house training.
Don't be afraid to spank them at first. You have to start training or disciplining them while they're young.

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles their dog?
Yes, because you are with each other most of the time so you know each other's habits or routines and you both adapt.

Best dog memory/moment.
Every time we go to Intramuros or any crowded place, lots of people always comment that he's so cute. He really does get a lot of compliments!

Special tricks or cool things your pet can do.
Sneezing and rolling his eyes. He really has expressive eyes.

How did your pet change your life?
I look forward to going home such time because I know he's waiting for me.

Malin Mandanas, 21, University of the East

Why did you choose that name?
She's our baby sister!

What is your dog's distinct personality?
She's unbelievably friendly with all humans but scared of other dogs, even toy dogs!

Are there any endearing things your pooch does?
She waits by the door until everyone comes home, and welcomes us for a good 10 minutes. She also stays by your bed when you're feeling down or sick.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?
She's a sleepyhead like me!

What was the biggest splurge you've done for your pet?
A new sofa for scratching and five new rompers/t-shirts for cuddling.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?
McDonald's meal. When her dog food runs out, she gets a delivery from McDonald's.

What are the games you play with your dog?
Fetch and Tug of War.

How do you spend quality time?
Watch TV and order from McDonald's.

How often do you shop for your pet?
Not often, because we don't really dress up.

Best doggie products you swear by?
Frontline anti-flea spray and Petlover dog nail cutter.

Please share your tips on house training.
Dogs are generally intelligent. Let them discover things by themselves, then reinforce your rules into their lifestyle.

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles their dog?
Yes. Being smart animals that they are, our dogs adapt well to their environment (including the people around them).

Best dog memory/moment.
We were in the elevator in my condo when a little girl saw Shoko and said to her mom, "Mommy, baboy!" Her mom replied, "No, dog you." The girl retorted, "Hindi! Baboy!"

Special tricks or cool things your pet can do.
Jump on the dining table. (Yuck!)

How did your pet change your life?
She changed our family's lives. We became closer because of her.

Ceda Olason, 21

What is your dog's distinct personality?
He is extremely lazy and is always hungry.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?
Yup, we're one together.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?
Food, lots of it!

How do you spend quality time?
Watching TV and movies at home.

What is your pet's signature style?
Scruffy.

Best doggie products you swear by?
Bugging-he-stops at home.

Please share your tips on house training.
Newspapers and Lysol!

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles their dog?
Yes, kind of. We both like to just lounge around.

How did your pet change your life?
He's the coolest dog you'll ever know.

MALIN and her Chinese sharpei Shoko, and Ceda with his shih-tzu Peace.

Jose Martin Antunez, 24

MARTIN with Zamot, his shih-tzu, and Agatha with Paris Tabuloc, a mini schnauzer

Why did you choose that name?
Amigo is Spanish for "friend."

What is your dog's distinct personality?
He's judgmental. He kind of thinks he's better than everyone else.

Are there any endearing things your pooch does?
He is not very nice.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?
Nope.

What was the biggest splurge you've done for your pet?
Haircuts, jewelry and shoes.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?
Trips—he loves going places.

How do you spend quality time?
Road trips.

How often do you shop for your pet?
Once a month.

Share your dog blackbook.
Better Dog, dog school.

Please share your tips on house training.
As a puppy, leave them on the grass after they eat.

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles their dog?
Nope.

How did your pet change your life?
I learned all dogs are like people. They have distinct characters.

What is your dog's distinct personality?
She is very temperamental.

Are there any endearing things your pooch does?
She's endearing.

Did your dog acquire any of your traits?
He's talkative. He barks and barks.

What was the biggest splurge you've done for your pet?
Spending for his clothes and monthly grooming.

Any dog indulgences? How do you spoil your pet?
We feed her steak! And she's allowed to use the Master's bath room.

What are the games you play with your dog?
Fetch.

How do you spend quality time?
Watch TV.

How often do you shop for your pet?
Yes, we dress her. She has a Bordetose cardiosis, because the Bordetose, and she has a fascia on her.

Best doggie products you swear by?
She likes going commando, to be honest. She doesn't like dressing up.

Best products you swear by?
Hi, baby cologne! It makes Paris smell like a baby and she never doesn't bath.

Please share your tips on house training.
Reward system... if she does her own exercise, I give her a cookie.

Do you believe that the owner usually resembles their dog?
Not the bad. I'm talkative and my dog is extremely noisy!

Special tricks or cool things your pet can do.
She runs on the treadmill!

How did your pet change your life?
I have more responsibilities...she's like my child!

Crazy for K-Pop

Sandara Park is now part of the all-girl group 2NE1

By Nina Mark M. Salden
JAS Correspondent

THE WORLD HAS GONE crazy over Korean pop. Very popular right now are boy bands and girl groups with members who harmonize beautifully and showcase well-choreographed dance steps. Good-looking, stylish, entertaining and better than kimchi, these are some of Korea's most in-demand groups.

Wonder Girls

Breaking into the music scene in early 2007, the group—composed of Sohee, Yubin, Yeeun, Yenny and Hyuna—was introduced to an MTV show and became popular thanks to massive hits such as "Tell Me," "So Hot" and "Nobody."

Hyuna eventually had to be pulled out by her parents ostensibly for health reasons (she is now with another girl group called 4minute), but she was replaced by Yubin, who has a solo rap part in the new version of "Tell Me."

The video for the song features a fun and easy-to-imitate choreography, which has resulted in a dance craze with fans from all over the world posting videos of themselves imitating the same moves.

The girls have performed in places like Bangkok and China and have invaded the US as well with an English version of "Nobody" and a front-act appearance for the Jonas Brothers. An English album is said to be in the works.

Big Bang

This all-male mystical group consists of five talented singer/dancers—G-Dragon, Tae Yang, T.O.P, Daesung and Seung Ri—who, even before coming together as a group, were already successful solo artists. G-Dragon and Tae Yang starred their careers when they were 12 years old, while T.O.P was an underground rapper.

Apart from releasing several extremely addictive and mini-albums of hip-hop songs, the Big Bang boys are also famous for their freestyle and street dancing. They are trendsetters, too, with their slanted caps, oversized, triangular scarves, shutter shades and face masks.

Famous for hits like "Haru Haru," "La-la-la," and "Number 1," the boys continued to get a lot of fans in places like Japan, where they have released Japanese versions of their songs.

2NE1

Tagged as the female version of Big Bang, 2NE1 (sorry G, Bom, Minzy and Dara [more popularly known as Sandara Park in Pinoy] are in minidress. While they can all sing and dance (their choreography is very impressive), each girl is unique when it comes to voice quality, image and fashion style. Still, they complement one another and look like a group.

Their first single, "Lollipop," was an advertisement song with Big Bang (last was used to promote a phone). Their actual debut single as a group, however, is the very energetic and catchy song "Fire." The song has two music videos, one of which was featured on Perez Hilton's blog.

It has also been reported that horoscope forecasts is interested in an American album for the girls. Not bad for a group that appeared on the scene only a couple of months ago.

2NE1 is scheduled to release a mini-album next week, one that contains the aforementioned pop/R&B song, called "I don't Care." We can't wait to hear if the rest of their stuff is as good as "Fire."

K-Pop away? E-mail the author at ninamarksalden@yahoo.com

IN THIS ISSUE
■ 'Dinig Sana Kita' is a standout in Cinemalaya fest /E2

Editor Nestor U. Torre ■ Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

SATURDAY Special

Stars fly high in new superhero flicks

By Rito P. Asilo

NO MEDIUM CAN MATCH THE unrewarding battle of good vs. evil better than the cinema, which explains the instant excitement a movie generates in the adventures of a comic-book superhero. Filmmakers led by Christopher Nolan have even managed to elevate these fantasy-fueled concoctions into critically-acclaimed features!

Exciting lineup

What's up next? Here's an exciting lineup that will keep superhero-philes happy.

Thunderstruck's cuteness golden boy Ryan Reynolds, in on a roll! First, he's beaten Justin Timberlake and Bradley Cooper to play Hal Jordan in Martin Campbell's "The Green Lantern." Thereafter, he takes a leap to the Marvel world, where he upholds the "Deadpool" episodic. Let's hope he doesn't suffer the fate of Hollie Berry who crossed swift roars as Storm in the "X-Men" movies, but turned off fans in "Catwoman."

Like Reynolds, Marion Brown also is taken on two coveted superhero roles: Starting Aug. 10, the romcom/a Emma in the action-fantasy series, "Kavita," or the small screen, three reviews "Thieves," "the nightmare driver the graveyard in "Ghabi, Ruhi and Bali 3," in a full-length spinoff for this year's MMFF.

Interestingly, the 2009 festival lineup includes two other superheroes: Harry Boquiren plays an ordinary father who becomes a superhero in Solar Films' "Waipakman," opposite Ghosle Schwarzenger and Bida Mae Quinto; and Bong Revilla reincarnates "Panday," the stylish and Pinoy hero.

A revival of the adventures of Darna (now aka "Wonder Woman") has also been in the pipeline.

It was announced last year that George Miller had chosen 5'10" Australian supermodel, Megan Gale, to play the popular superheroine in "Justice League of America," along with Adam Brody as The Flash, Scott Porter as Superman, Armie Hammer as Batman and hip-hop artist, Common, as the Green Lantern's John Stewart.

For her part, Megan Boz recently wrapped up shooting the costume-based supernatural western, "Australia Rim," with Josh Brolin and Nicole Wallowski. Natalie Portman has been tapped to play Anne Foster opposite Chris Hemsworth as the Norse god, "Thor," with Kenneth Branagh at the helm.

RIVERA AND REYNOLDS (RIGHT): Portray Darna and The Green Lantern, respectively

GALE: Cast as Wonder Woman in George Miller's "Justice League of America."

Developments

Other developments at Marvel: Edgar Wright ("Shaun of the Dead") and Joe Johnston ("Jurassic Park 3") will direct "Ant-Man" and "The Final Avenger: Captain America," respectively.

Over at DC, Dan Mazeau is writing a fresh treatment for "The Flash"; Warner Bros. is developing "Silent Strange," "Bizarro Superman" and "The Green Arrow"; Peter Segal ("50 First Dates") is attached to direct the Captain Marvel flick, "Billy Batson and the Legend of Shazam," for New Line and scientific DiCaprio Appian Way is producing "Aquaman."

sun
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Betty White is very much alive—and funny—despite rumors MJ will be buried alongside her

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Aubrey V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—AT 87 years old, Betty White is still very much alive, kicking and dishing racy jokes. A reporter on TV's "Today" show had said that Michael Jackson will be buried in Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills alongside such stars as Liberace, David Carradine and... Betty White.

To paraphrase Mark Twain's famous quote, reports of Betty sharing the soil with dead celebs are greatly exaggerated. But, two of her "Golden Girls" costars, Rue McClanahan and Estelle Getty had moved on to the great sitcom in the sky.

But after decades in the biz, Betty is busier than ever. She's one of the good reasons to see Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds' romantic comedy "The Proposal."

Playing a grandma in the film about a tyrannical New York book editor (Sandra) and her long-suffering assistant (Ryan), Betty shows that she's still at the top of her game.

Showing no sign of slowing down, Betty is also filming "80s Again" with Kristen Bell, Kristin Chenoweth, Sigourney Weaver and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Excerpts

Below are excerpts of our interview with the First Lady of American Television.

How fun was it making "The Proposal"?

That may be the single most fun I've ever had on a project. It was the chemistry on the set that was phenomenal. A lot of the credit goes to director Anne Fletcher, who's so crazy on the rest of us.

How do you maintain being sharp, alert and beautiful?

I'm addicted to crossword puzzles for one thing (laughter). I keep my weight down because I have a recovery house and a very bad memory so I'm up and down those stairs all the time (laughter). I ask myself, "What did I come up here for?"

How do you keep the comedy going on in your life?

I have to laugh. I was the luckiest and happiest only child in the world with the best parents. I really know how to pick parents (laughter). My father and mother didn't teach me, but they showed me how to look on the upside and the funny side.

Can you talk about sex?

I feel like guys (laughter). It's that simple. I always have and always will. My husband, Allen Luddon—God bless him—used to say I was a female chauvinist pig in the sense that I liked being around guys more than girls.

Are you sharing your life with someone now?

Let's say I've had some very nice friendships since I lost Allen (he died in December 1981 after 33 years of marriage). I'm not looking for anything. I'm very happy with my life.

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MOVIEWORLD

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GALLERIA

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 IT'S ALIVE
4 PUBLIC ENEMIES
5 MY SISTER'S KEEPER
6 ICE AGE 3 : DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
8 Imelda Diaz: NAMETS / OOBE
9 HARRY POTTER 6 / ICE AGE 3
10 MANILA

ERMITA

1 MY SISTER'S KEEPER
2 IT'S ALIVE
3 HARRY POTTER 6
4 HARRY POTTER 6
5 PUBLIC ENEMIES
6 MANILA
7 ICE AGE 3 / TRANSFORMERS 2

METRO EAST

1 IT'S ALIVE
2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 HARRY POTTER 6
4 PUBLIC ENEMIES
5 ICE AGE 3
6 MY SISTER'S KEEPER
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
8 MANILA

NOVALICHES

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2 IT'S ALIVE
3 PUBLIC ENEMIES
4 HARRY POTTER 6

PIONEER

1 PUBLIC ENEMIES
2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 MY SISTER'S KEEPER
4 IT'S ALIVE

STA. ROSA

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 THE COFFIN
4 ECHELON CONSPIRACY

LIPA

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123
4 THE COFFIN

DASMARIÑAS

1 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
2 THE COFFIN
3 HARRY POTTER 6
4 HARRY POTTER 6

IMUS

1 ECHELON CONSPIRACY
2 HARRY POTTER 6
3 HARRY POTTER 6
4 THE COFFIN

STARMILLS

1 ICE AGE 3
2 MANILA
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 HARRY POTTER 6
6 HARRY POTTER 6

ANGELES

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 FROM WITHIN
3 TRANSFORMERS 2
4 HARRY POTTER 6

TACLOBAN

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123
3 THE COFFIN

BACOLOD

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123
3 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
4 HARRY POTTER 6
5 THE AMUSEMENT
6 VILLA ESTRELLA / TRANSFORMERS 2

ILOILO

1 HARRY POTTER 6
2 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
3 MOTHER OF TEARS
4 HARRY POTTER 6
5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

Festival standout

By Hector U. Torre

"DIBO SAMA KITA." Stones have initially dissimilar backgrounds but are in fact mirror images of each other.

ONE OF THE CREDIBLE FILMS getting a lot of attention and praise in this year's ongoing Cinemalaya Film Festival is "Dibo Sama Kita." The film is a unique and compelling drama about two very different young people—Mika, a troubled rocker, and Kiko, a timid street orphan. Filmmaker Jon Sandejas had given himself a difficult task: To show how such initially dissimilar individuals are in fact mirror images of each other from many supposedly big standpoints.

Mika (Zoe Sandejas) can beat, but her seemingly uncaring parents don't listen to her, so she might as well be mute. Their seeming lack of concern for her has forced her to seek refuge and succumb to the loud world of rock music, but the frustration it provides is temporary and she soon has to confront her familial demons.

Opportunity

The opportunity to do this is provided by an invitation for Mika to sit school, which prompts school officials to send her to Baguio to attend a workshop with some deaf youths. The idea is to teach her to care about people other than herself, and thus get over what her teachers feel is her antisocial and rebellious behavior.

In Dibo, Mika finds the deaf youths refreshing and pathetic. With the help of the camp director (Robert Seña), however, she gradually opens up and stops thinking only about herself, for a change.

For his part, Kiko (Ronaldo Mulat) doesn't even only deaf, but he is also an orphan who desperately needs to find his parents. Like Mika, he feels unloved, and this has warped his view of himself in a big way. Killing escape hatch is his love for dancing, which he's been able to develop despite his deafness (by feeling the vibrations of the music he's dancing to).

Not surprisingly, Mika and Kiko, the apparent polar opposites, are drawn to each other—and, eventually, to help each other become whole. This is a different plot and character arc to trace vividly onscreen, but writer-director Sandejas proves to be up to the daunting task at hand.

He is able to make his film's complex material wieringly accessible to viewers, especially to young people who may not be physically disabled but suffer from psychological equivalents in their own lives.

Fusion

With his deft conceptual use of music and silence, the filmmaker compellingly draws viewers into his protagonists' initially opposite worlds, then shows how those worlds converge and open up enough to a telling lesson that says a lot about our need to communicate on one hand, and the tragedy of all forms of miscommunication on the other.

In the hands of a lesser artist, this material could have ended up as a well-intended "lecture on sensitivity." Happily, Sandejas' inspired handling avoids numerous sociological traps and, aided by his lead players' luminous and informed portrayals, emerges as one of the most effective and popular productions in this year's festival—a must-see in our book.

Demystifying hoods and heroes

From page 84

them, however, he finds himself fighting for his life after a petty bar brawl goes horrendously wrong.

Yes, we liked "Manila" more than we thought we would. Unfortunately, it's hard to suspend disbelief that Pedro is a lovable, because he looks too ill and doubting and he's also one fashionably well-groomed to be somebody's gothic stereotype. Moreover, you hardly feel his characters' sense of urgency or desperation, dirty shirt notwithstanding.

Durand's phlegmatic, anti-suspense performance doesn't draw him going beyond looking worried, thus preventing the film from truly taking flight. It's a pity, because such a more adventurous sense, the movie's novel idea and thematic concern could have acquired a stirring resonance beyond its elegant reason for being.

POWER PLANT CINEMA

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HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE - DP 1:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:00	MY SISTER'S KEEPER - PG13 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8:00, 10:00	PUBLIC ENEMIES - R15 2:00, 5:00, 8:00
HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE - DP 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00	HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE - DPVRDIGI 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00	PUBLIC ENEMIES - R15 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

PRICES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

New 'Storyline' . . .

From page 84

examples and some performance events.

Sarah Geronimo

Today at 2 p.m., leading RTW brand, Unico Flip, welcomes singing pop princess, Sarah Geronimo, as she leads the official opening of Unico Flip's newest branch at SM Bicutan.

Ida Ramos Honores

EMA Arts Center head, Ida Ramos Honores, will be the first Filipina judge in the prestigious Asian Supermodel Competition slated on July 25-26 in Nanning, China. Other talents, Rich Asuncion, Jessica Alcaraz and Lee Matiru will be vying for the win.

'The Forgotten War'

Girls Gone Chic's "The Forgotten War" will be screened anew tonight at 9 at the Greenhills Promenade. The film stars Baron Geisler and Ryan Eigbert and honors the involvement of 7,500 Filipino soldiers in the Second war.

Movies on TV

On Cinemax today at 3 p.m., "Shadow of the Law Act." Tomorrow at 10:45 a.m., "At the High Wire." July 27 at 10:45 a.m., "The Blue Brothers." July 28 at 1 p.m., "The Glimmer Man." July 29 at 2:45 p.m., "Sling Blade." July 30 at 3 p.m., "Dangerous Liaisons." July 31 at 9 p.m., "The First Wives"

Regine's 'Most Requested'

Miss Concerts and Events presents Regine Velasquez in "Most Requested," a two-night musical event on Aug. 1 and 8 at the Skydome of SM North Edsa. Also featured is Ryan Cayabyab. So, Regine's frequent vocal cohort they were talk trying to make it an intimate singing session. Call 911-5555 or 661-6161 loc 6207.

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GATEWAY CINEPLEX 10

ICE AGE 3 DIGITAL 3D 2:00, 4:00, 6:00	PLATINUM CINEMA HARRY POTTER 3:00, 6:00, 9:00	HARRY POTTER 10:00, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
MANILA 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00	MY SISTERS KEEPER 12:00, 2:30, 4:00, 7:15, 9:30	ICE AGE 3 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
PUBLIC ENEMIES 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	ICE AGE 3 1:30	IT'S ALIVE 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
TRANSFORMERS 12:00, 3:30, 4:30, 8:30, 9:30	HARRY POTTER 3D 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30	PUBLIC ENEMIES 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 10:30

WATCH THE MAGIC IN DOLBY SUPER DIGITAL

BIG SHOWS AT THE BIG DOME

Cronkite's passing a timely reminder for broadcasters

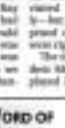
CRONKITE. Espoused tips on objective news reporting.

Satisfying that Mexican craving

RECENTLY, MY FAMILY AND I spent a wonderful week in Hermosillo, Mexico. The Pueblo Bonito Emerald Bay resort, where we stayed, had all the facilities you could imagine. The weather was perfect, and the food was simply divine. Of course we were out to discover authentic Mexican eateries.

Our daily routine: Tessa and I would wake up early and rush breakfast for the kids. Then, we'd go in the beach or relaxing out in the pool. As I go on, we would take the bus to town, where we would try a different Mexican restaurant every evening.

WORD OF MOUTH



Sandy Daza

Advantage

A notable favorite was Pollo Loco—their version of Recaldo Chicken Inasal—which we visited three days in a row! It was a beautiful culinary experience. It was an adventurous and fun way to get authentic Mexican cuisine served like. The disadvantage, though, is that it's now harder to please our palate when we come for good Mexican food.

Back home, when fellow barbecue-addicts, Lawrence and his wife, Bernice, recommended this new Mexican place in Greenhills called Rancho Mexicano Grill, they were more I would find it interesting. Armed with deeper knowledge of Mexican food, I visited the place reluctantly—but was pleasantly surprised to discover that they were right!

The ingredients they put in their Mexican wraps are displayed in front, and all you have to do is choose from their wide selection. I had a burrito, which was made from real flour tortilla, cilantro lime, cheese mixture, rice and beans, red and green chili, diner's choice of meat (beef, pork or chicken—I had the latter), sour salsa, guacamole, shredded cheese, sour cream and lettuce—enough to feed two people. I loved it!

Interesting dish

Another interesting dish was the quesadilla—which is usually small, but theirs was thick and loaded with fillings. It was delicious and was quite close to those we tried on the streets of Mazatlan. Now, I know where to go when I crave for Mexican food.

To get there: From Dr. Orlino, take Wilson down to Aleta St. Turn right, and there will be on your right, Viva Mexico!

E-mail: sandydaza@yahoo.ca

Lessons from fables

THE CHINESE HAVE wonderful fables that can teach us valuable lessons. Here are three of them.

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bernardi

Once upon a time, a wolf and a jackal went together to hunt for some sheep. Later, they reached a farm where the sheep lived behind a fence, which was too high for them to climb over.

So, they decided to use each other's attributes to their advantage. The wolf had long forelegs and short hind legs, while the jackal had short forelegs and long hind legs. The wolf would use the teeth of the jackal, which stood up on its long hind legs. This way, the wolf was able to climb over the fence.

Noble intentions

Lesson: If the wicked can unite together to achieve evil deeds, the kind-hearted must work in greater cooperation with others to attain their noble intentions.

Once upon a time, a clam opened its shell to sunbathe on the beach. Instantly, a bird attacked and put its beak in the clam, which immediately shut its shell—and trapped the bird's beak! But, each refused to give up its position. Stuck in this predicament, they were later caught by a passing fisherman.

Lesson: If two parties are too stubborn to accept defeat, a third party gains from the stalemate.

Once upon a time, a man took care of monkeys who could understand whatever he said. One day, the man said: "I'm now experiencing great poverty. I need to decrease your food ration. I will serve you four acorns in the morning and three at night"—which upset the monkeys.

So, the man revised his suggestion, "I will instead give you three acorns in the morning and four in the evening"—which pleased the monkeys.

Lesson: Don't be gullible!

Betty White . . .

From page 01

passed away in 1963). When you've had the best, who needs the rest? Allow me the honor.

You seem very happy.

I am genuinely so. Of course, everything isn't wonderful in life, but you keep thinking of the alternatives. My prayers are always thankgiven.

Grateful

You're one of the very few stars who went successfully from very young, to mentioned over. What do you think of ageism in Hollywood?

They're going to catch someone of those days (laughter). Nobody is more surprised that I'm still working as if. I can't believe it. I just signed for another Disney movie. Every once in a while, I look in the mirror and think, "You're still working? Really?" (Laughter) But, I can't complain. I'm grateful. I'm deeply grateful.

Your two most successful TV series were "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and "The Golden Girls." In the former, you played this ex-hungry...

Unsophisticated sympathetic daughter.

And, in "The Golden Girls,

By Hector U. Barns

THE RECENT DEATH OF AGE 92 of broadcast journalism icon, Walter Cronkite, should serve as a timely reminder for all broadcast journalists of their core ethical and professional standards and obligations.

These days, those rules are being broken with abandon all over the place—all the more reason, then, to relearn them from a revered icon like Cronkite, who served millions of viewers so well and for so long by espousing objective news reportage out in the name of "substantiation."

Achievements

The local TV scene is no particularly great need of rehabilitation and reform when it measures the light reportage of news, as our broadcast reporters and anchors have a lot to learn and relearn from Cronkite, the high-minded news achievements should remind them of those key principles that they have long chosen to forget.

For the news, just to **reporters**, as you shouldn't call attention to yourself, as viewers use focus objectively on the news itself.

This is a particularly sore point **locally, because many of our TV** news anchors and reporters think they're more and lovely to look at, to boot.

Then drive to the ratios and spare the latest fashions—and, oh, how they love to lose their own names, which they further "enhance" with exaggerated social distinctions and "voice-lose" techniques. ...How hokey can you get?

Just report the news—no **opinionating, please.** Local anchors find this so difficult to do, because they also have roles as disc-TV programs where all they do is "opinionators." Thus, they have a hard time simply reporting the news on their newscasts.

In addition, TV news "stars" are so full of themselves that genuine public service is low in their list of priorities. These days, it's all about the power, not the news, and to the public's welfare be damned.

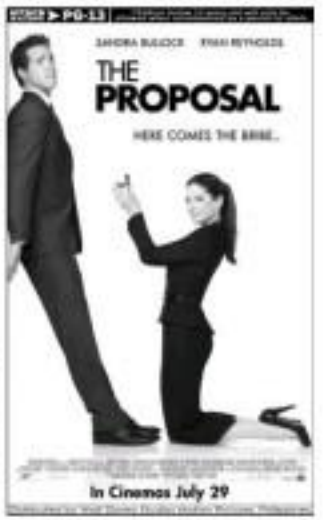
Finally, news is not entertainment. This has become a big bone of contention these days, because "jazzing up" the news is now the rule rather than the exception on TV newscasts. Music, sound effects, state-of-the-art visuals, "exciting" treatment of news "stories"—these gimmicks and tricks are used all the time, and objective news reportage has consequently suffered.

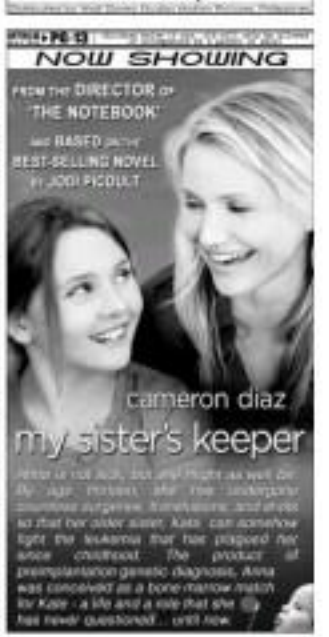
Biggest distraction

On local TV, the biggest distraction has been provided by the inordinate number of crime and violence-related news items reported on every night. Many of these "reports" have little real news value, but they knock more than a few senseless stories out of the line-up, because they're more "exciting" and "dramatic." But, how like Cronkite would remind everyone that "excitement" and "drama" aren't what the news should be all about, because they distract rather than inform.

More recently, these hit-news items have also become popular on TV newscasts, as they too have edged out more legitimate news stories. Thus, instead of getting a good examination of the day's most significant events, viewers are being shown changed.

It's up to viewers to raise the bar of their expectations and remind our TV news people of their true role and function. Let the revered Walter Cronkite show the way.





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In the action-thriller Public Enemies, acclaimed filmmaker Michael Mann directs Johnny Depp, Christian Bale, and Academy Award® winner Marion Cotillard in the incredible and true story of legendary Depression-era bank robber John Dillinger (Depp), the charismatic bank robber whose lightning raids made him the number one target of J. Edgar Hoover's fledgling FBI and its top agent, Melvin Purvis (Bale), and a folk hero to much of the downtrodden public.

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Audie Murphy, real-life war hero

MURPHY His life was more spectacular than his roles.

By Bebs Cervantes

AUDIE MURPHY had a reputation to live up to even before Hollywood beckoned. He was World War II's most decorated American hero, having won over a dozen coveted medals, including the prestigious Congressional Medal of Honor.

Background

He was a publicity agent's dream, because of his very interesting background. His father came from a family of sharecroppers in Texas. At age 16, he was orphaned and had to take care of three younger siblings, so he was forced to drop out of school. Audie then taught himself how to shoot and reload in the Army, where he served with great distinction.

He was hopelessly good looking. He seemed vulnerable, though he had proven his courage in real life. Surely, he could do it again and again on screen, or so Hollywood hoped.

Murphy established himself as a bankable star in "Bad Badge of Courage." However, his real life was more spectacular than his roles, and Tinseltown didn't know what to do with the real-life hero after his initial cinematic success. He was soon typecast in B movie-westerns. After many forgettable productions, he appeared in his tragic, "To Hell and Back."

It was later revealed that he suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. His ex-wife Vivian claimed that he held a gun to her head during a bout of depression that he found unpaper in James Cagney, who helped boost his Hollywood career.

Solid performance

Aside from "Bad Badge of Courage" and "To Hell and Back," he is also remembered in John Huston's "The Unforgiven," in which he proved he could deliver a solid performance.

The world mourned Murphy's death in a plane crash in 1971. He was only 46 years old then, but the decorated war hero had indeed been to hell and back.

Meaningful travel experience

IN MY TRAVELS AS A TEACHER of photography I have volunteered with Alliance Travel and Tours, the Gig and the Amazing Smilepainter Foundation for the Road Ahead program, and the Archive of Books Across the Seas (BATS).

I don't only offer a holiday photo safari, but also traveling by invitation to the local schools...by reading to their pupils.

Brainchild

Integrating yourself into a school is a unique experience. At the Cuevasan Starts School in Sabang, the photo safari participants didn't read to the children...the children read to them. BATS, a brainchild of Marnie Dee, provided children with books to keep for themselves.

On top of learning photography, participants also see, hear, smell, touch and taste the destinations we go to. They get to know the children and their reading skills.

I now plan to expand my photo safari all over the country, so that we can reach out to as many

STREET SMART

Mandy Navarro

THE AUTHOR (standing, second left) with other reading advocates

pupils as possible. The Gig Foundation chooses the most remote areas. It's a thrilling and life-changing experience!

* * *

Join the One-Day Photo School for seven Saturdays. Subjects include digital camera operation, *parsetting, fashion and food photography*. Beginning Aug. 1. Email mandynavarro@yahoo.com, or call 899-1767.

'Brutus' packs a dramatic, thematic wallop

By Nestor U. Torre

VIEWERS WHO VALUE SUBstance, relevance and fresh cinematic edge should watch the indie feature, "Brutus," by Tara Illenberger. The filmmaker is an accomplished film editor, and her eye for striking images and her flair for tension and pacing are evident throughout her debut feature. Editors are efficient storytellers, so this virtuoso similarly contributes to the film's success.

Pete, screenwritten by Ian Pascual Clemeñoya, "Brutus," which stars Pol Serve, now teaches art to the mainstream audience with its hard-edged story about two impoverished youths who are forced to transport illegally cut lumber downriver. They're

SERVE (RIGHT) Topshi Hontanger's acclaimed indie.

at the very bottom of the illicit trade's feeding cycle and thus benefit the least from its profits and yet, they must say having subjected in some of its harshest penalties. Being young, however, they manage to survive and even learn from their damning experience.

Viewers can also learn a lot by seeing the movie's unfolding story and themes through their eyes, and the director makes sure that there's a feeling that everyone, on one level, the film deals with harsh realities and issues that seem to focus on the environment, lawlessness, violence, poverty and sickness. Aside from those already potent concerns, however, the movie also focuses on its protagonists' youth, which makes them a fabulo cast for others to "point" on.

Helpless victims

Thus, the young protagonists are made to cover many different characters who richly key stories in Philippine society's ongoing struggle for political and cultural dominance. The fact that they're too young to fully comprehend how these power groups warp war on each other only makes their journey all the more risky, and confusing.

Most tragically of all, the film's most helpless victim is the environment itself, which is thoroughly pillaged by practically all of the players in the film, including the youths themselves, whose poverty and lack of guidance make it easy for them to succumb to the temptation of what was intended to be their treasure and capital for the future.

NOW SHOWING

Demystifying hoods and heroes

By Rito P. Asilo

PATTERNS JOHNNY DEPP AND PASCAL Pascual (whatever the characters they respectively portray in Michael Mann's fact-based gangster saga, "Public Enemies," and Carmenlaya Gioco's opening film, "Manila") remind us of past William Eaton thrillers's verse from "Darkness": "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul."

DEPP AND PASCUAL: Canvassing portrayals.

Charismatic gangster

"Public Enemies" continues 13 months in the life of charismatic gangster John Dillinger (played with effortless grace by Depp), at the height of the Great Depression in 1930s America—between the day the FBI's Public Enemy No. 1 escaped prison and the night his ass finally caught up with him.

What sets Mann apart from other, less-talented filmmakers is the fact that he doesn't choose subject matter whose black and white areas are easily identifiable—it's the gray areas of his films that make them riveting. Here, he lets the audience decide: Is Dillinger a misunderstood hero or a charismatic bum?

Mann doesn't pander to viewers' expectations of how a movie should look or how a character should be portrayed. True, he doesn't always get the desired effects: On a result, viewers don't empathize strongly with the characters, but nobody can accuse him of being convention and or predictable. Still, a broken pace and indecisive streaming of protracted scenes could have mangled the movie.

Depp deftly conveys Dillinger's Robin Hood-like charisma and brilliant narcissism's sound. He didn't just go with the flow—he chose his own direction.

Christian Bale plays Melvin Purvis, the agent assigned by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover (Billy Crudup) to pursue Dillinger and his girl friend, Billie Frechette (Marion Cotillard). He finds the equilibrium between Purvis' moral ambiguity and ambition a compelling balancing act.

Unusual challenge

Interestingly, Hayu Martic and child Alia Jr.'s inexpressively photographed two-parter, "Manila," presents an unusual challenge for its lead non-performers, Pascual, who plays the beleaguered protagonist in the two's opposites—both victims of their respective lives.

The overcomplicated "Day" segment casts the heartthrob as William, a drug addict who inadvertently exposes revealing snippets of life in the streets of Manila as he roams the city in pursuit of a quick fix. In "Night," intense sensibility is more unnecessary, Pedo portrays Phillip, the ex-go-to-please driver-cum bodyguard of an affluent politician's busty son.

Undeserving National Artist wannabes' pressure tactics deplored

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR MANY YEARS NOW, THE NATIONAL Artist awards have set the benchmark for Filipinos' best lifetime achievements in the arts. Thus, it serves the valuable service of inspiring younger artists to do similarly exceptional work in their own artistic lifetimes.

Of late, however, the prestigious awards have lost some of their shine, because politics and pressure groups have come into the picture.

Distinction

In a words, by our estimation, fully one third of all National Artist awardees may not be all that deserving of the country's top artistic honor.—So much for setting the highest possible artistic standards and inspiring younger artists to strive-up to them.

If they sense that the awards can be "won" by means other than career long excellence, they won't work as hard to develop their own talents. Worse, all National Artist awardees could lose a measure of their august distinction, since their ranks may have been infiltrated by some undeserving interlopers.

These nervous thoughts came to mind, because the latest insider reports in arts circles suggest that more undeserving "winners" may be added to the growing list. If these dire prospects materialize, woe to us all, because the time-honored awards may end up being watered—and what a waste and pity that would be.

Of course, the latest batch of aspirants who want to leap-frog the standard vetting process by resorting to political and other pushiness believe that they do deserve the honor.

Objectivity

Unfortunately, other artists contradict the objectivity of their self-admiration. Sire, and wish that their over-arching personal ambition doesn't result in the awards' body being thrown out with the bathwater bathwater.

In truth, these fears are not without basis, because artists and art lovers can rule (not so much). It's "winner" is clearly undeserving, they could lose respect not just for the individual "winner" but for the awards themselves.

In addition, how would legitimate winners of the awards feel about the illusion and disillusion of the country's top artistic honor? You can bet that these legitimate awardees will leave who awards that new colleagues deserve to join their august company—or not. And, how would the deserving awardees express their disapproval of or dispute over this and other awards on the awards that have legit. merely capped their exceptional stature?

We raise these doubts and fears hopefully early enough to prevent what, some minds is ignorance before. It's on late individual ambitions to undermine this, but the distinction—and survival—of the National Artist awards are much more important, and should be held paramount above all else.

New 'Storyline' episodes

THE NEW SEASON OF AMC'S "STORYLINE" anthology documentary show starts on Feb. 24 with new episode that offers elements of cinema to tell stories of

MONTAGE hope, faith and courage. The July 24 telecast focuses in part on embedded broadcast journalist Christine Lasser's adventures reporting two

'Saltang Piray'

"Saltang Piray," Thelma Orive-Salandanan's Tagalog source-book, has been published by LSS Language Textual Services. The source proceeds logically from the building blocks of the language to its more conversational level. It has detailed

CONTENTS of sourcebook facilitates learning and comprehension.

WINNER. She is the jury of the Asian Supermodel Competition.